INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

1947-2003

J. N. DIXIT

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In this volume, J.N. Dixit, India's former Foreign Secretary, paints a broad canvas, stretching across a time span of more than 50 years, with bold, powerful and authoritative strokes. The vivid colours, the intricate patterns and, above all, the overall comprehensive picture of India's foreign policy reflect the deft touch of a master artist who has created a modern-day masterpiece.

Beginning with a historical perspective, the author traces the origins of India's foreign policy from 1947 onwards. He describes how the foundations were laid by Jawaharlal Nehru and built up later, by his successors, into the edifice that has now attained a lofty stature.

In the course of this illuminating narrative the author projects, in a chronological order, the various facets of India's foreign policy as they evolved. He also describes their impact on both the national and international fronts. This volume puts into perspective significant epoch-making events which profoundly affected the orientation of India's foreign policy priorities and also incisively analyses their ramifications and repercussions. For instance:

- The Indo-Pak conflicts of 1947-48, 1965 and 1971.
- The UN's dubious stance vis-à-vis Kashmir.
- The Indo-China war of 1962.
- The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979.
- The disintegration of the gigantic Soviet Union.
- The Kashmir imbroglio and Pakistan's "proxy war" strategies.
- The 1991 Gulf War.
- The nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan in May 1998.

Apart from critically evaluating India's relations with various countries of the world, especially the USA, Soviet Union (then Russia), China and Pakistan at various points of time, the book also examines international relations with reference to specific events.

This edition throws new light on the recent developments impinging significantly on India's foreign policy strategies such as the Kargil war, the Vajpayee-Musharraf Agra summit and the occupation of Iraq by the US and the UK.

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INDIANS
RESERVATION
POLICY

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1947–2003

J. N. DIXIT

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To my mother, the late Dr. Mrs. Ratnamayi Devi Dikshit, who imbued in me an intellectual curiosity, instilled in me the courage of my convictions and above all, inspired me, 55 years ago, towards joining the Indian Foreign Service.

Preface

Normally, three valid reasons could be put forward for writing a book on a subject such as "foreign policy", or on related subjects, such as current affairs and politics. The first reason would be that nobody else has written on the subject. The second reason could be the belief that one has something original or different to convey from what has already been in the public knowledge factually or in terms of analyses. The third reason could be the assessment and conviction of the author that he may possibly provide a different perspective or analysis based on his personal experience on the subject he is writing about. I cannot lay claim to the first two reasons for writing this book. I plead guilty to the third reason as the motivation for presenting this panoramic description and analysis of India's foreign policy over the last 50 years. I lay claim to presenting a different perspective because I have been a part of the foreign policy establishment of India for 36 out of the 50 years of India's fashioning its foreign policy and conducting foreign relations as an independent country. I have been an observer of India's foreign relations for an additional eight years — a university student in international relations and in the post-retirement years since 1994, as a university professor, political columnist, and media analyst. Discarding false modesty, I also claim that I might have acquired personal insights and understandings about the evolution and implementation of India's foreign policy as a member of the Indian Foreign Service — insights and understandings which I wish to share with my compatriots as well as the world at large. I sincerely hope that my viewpoints shall arouse their curiosity about, and lead to a critical evaluation of, India's participation in international relations over the last 50 years, which, in turn, could contribute to a better comprehension of the motivations and

interests which governed India's foreign policy at different points of time.

I have structured the contents of this book in three broad sections. The first eight chapters undertake a descriptive, chronological analysis of the evolution of India's foreign policy and its broad strands, focussing, where necessary, on the manner in which we dealt with particular events or issues of significance during the last 50 years. The second section, from Chapters 9 to 14, presents an analysis of India's foreign policy in issue-specific terms dealing with subjects such as Kashmir, UN reforms, Non-alignment, foreign economic relations and institutional processes by which India's foreign policy was planned and implemented. The third section, comprising Chapters 14 and 15, consists of a critical evaluation of strengths and weaknesses which characterised our foreign policy during the last half century and a general analysis of the challenges with respect to foreign relations that India might face in the twenty-first century.

The last two chapters are really a postscript, focussing on the nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan in May 1998 and seeks to throw light on their repercussions and ramification.

This book is also an exercise in personal introspection, and, hopefully, an inducement to collective introspection by all of us Indians about the manner in which we have dealt with the world around us. Such introspection may enable us to cope with the changing international situation that we and the next generation of Indians may face in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

While writing this book, I have been able to discern the complex adventure that India is going through in establishing its identity as a nation-state and in defining its position in the international community. The constituent ingredients of this adventure according to my perceptions are as follows:

First, the difficult task India is engaged in, i.e., of resolving the contradictions inherent in consolidating itself as a pluralistic nation-state through the more difficult, more gradual and rational processes of democracy.

Secondly, India's continuing efforts at resolving the contradictions between its sense of self and self-importance in

contrast with the way the rest of the world perceives us in terms of our political cohesion, economic and military strengths and strategic motivations.

The third contradiction which we have had to deal with is the difficult task of reconciling the moral vision on the basis of which we wish the international order to be structured with the non-moral requirements of "realpolitik" to which we have had to adjust, time and again.

The fashioning and implementation of India's foreign policy on the basis of democratic consensus were, therefore, not easy tasks for the people of India or the governments which they elected over the last 50 years.

The conclusion that I have come to is that we have managed our foreign relations with practicality and good sense, in the process meeting our fundamental national interests and adhering to basically moral terms of reference to the extent possible. It is also my view that we have achieved this objective despite our many limitations, collective shortcomings and adversarial external pressures that we have faced. One is not smug about this, one is pleasantly surprised with the resilience and common sense of our people which have enabled us to cope with a world which still continues to be in ferment. The challenges ahead are likely to be more uncertain and more complex compared to the second half of the twentieth century. If this general analysis of the past enables us even in a small manner to cope with the future, this book would have served its purpose.

I would like to place on record my gratitude to my publishers and my editors for the encouragement and assistance they gave me. My special thanks are again due to my colleague, R.N. Sharma, who continues to be a pillar of strength in my exercises in authorship. His typing the manuscript and helping me finalise it remain important factors in my continued interest in writing.

I must acknowledge in advance an imposition which readers might be critical about in this book, that of the same trends and events being mentioned more than once, in different Chapters the "imposition of repetition"! The justification that I submit is that in a

book like this, surveying Indian foreign policy over a period of 50 years, one has to take account of the decisions, events and policy trends which had a multi-dimensional effect on India's foreign policy in terms of issues on which they impacted at different points of time. It is my hope that readers will indulge me when they come across references to the same event or decisions more than once in the book, in different contexts.

Finally, the shortcomings in the book are entirely my responsibility.

— J.N. Dixit

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1

India's Foreign Policy: Conceptual and Philosophical Origins

Before getting into the nitty-gritty of India's foreign policy over the past 50 years, it would be revealing as well as useful to go back in time in order to decipher and understand the germane events and developments which formed the underpinnings or the *raison d'être* of such policy.

One of the founding fathers of French socialism, Claude-Henri de Rouvroy Comte de Saint Simon (1760-1825), by applying the dialectic doctrine to the past and future of societies, put forward the theory that they always alternated between what he termed "the organic and critical periods". He distinguished between the two as follows: "The law of human development reveals two distinct and alternative states of society, one the organic, in which all human actions are classed, foreseen and regulated by a general approach with objectives of political and social activity clearly defined; the other, the critical, in which all community of thought, all communal action, all coordination has ceased. This is the critical predicament or period through which a given state or society passes."

Each of aforementioned two states or conditions occupies two distinct periods of history. In the organic state, all basic problems — theological, political, economic and moral — receive appropriate consideration and provisional solutions are arrived at on the basis of a structured vision through equally well-ordained institutions. But a stage could be reached where the vision of the leaders, the institutions and the process of solutions become inadequate to meet the challenges faced by society. This stage leads to a critical predicament or period in a state's life. This period is marked by debate, protest and transition. The certainties and ordered anticipations of the past are replaced by doubt, individualism and a certain amount of indifference to the stupendous problems which a society may face. These terms of reference, as articulated by Saint Simon, are relevant to us in India at present, as we have completed 50 years of existence as a modern, independent, sovereign nation-state.

Whatever interpretative variations there may be about the politico-territorial identity of India in the pre-British times, there can be no fundamental difference of opinion on the point that it was the first time in recorded history that the peoples of subcontinental India welded themselves into a nation-state in 1946-47. We are in the process of consolidating this new national identity amidst our incredible diversities and palpable tensions created by centrifugal aspirations characterising different segments of our society. Fifty years may not be a sufficiently long period in the life of a country for arriving at a holistic or an authentic historical evaluation of the perspectives and policies which characterised our foreign relations. Nevertheless, the passage of half a century is a long enough period to undertake an interim evaluation of these perspectives and policies.

Harking back to Saint Simon's terms of reference, I believe that, in a short time perspective, India has moved from the organic period to the critical one; i.e., from the ordained vision which dealt with a world of certainties (to the extent that such certainties can be abiding) into an era of ferment which is compounded by uncertainties and doubts about our own reaction to the world

around us. The validity of our orientations and perspectives, of necessity, stand questioned in the context of the end of the Cold War and the ideological confrontations which have affected the international community for nearly seven decades since the end of the First World War.

The essential objective of this work is *to focus attention on the attitudes which governed our foreign policy over the past 50 years*. The subject matter seeks to examine the evolution of our foreign policy during this period. It will be an attempt to assess, as objectively as possible, whether or not our responses to the challenges that we faced in the arena of international relations met our national interests, were they adequate; or, could we have chosen to go down a different path which would have been more appropriate for our requirements and more responsive to our needs and aspirations? Introspection is not just relevant, but also necessary, for adjusting to change which is the most abiding characteristic of history in a civilisational sense. It is now time for introspection.

A recapitulation of the origins of our foreign policy in terms of our ethos and our motivations would be essential. These origins pre-date India's achieving dominion status in 1946 and eventually independence in August 1947. They had their roots in the thought processes of the leaders of our renaissance in the late eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries and in those of the national freedom movement during the first four decades of the twentieth century. As a consequence, it became evident that if India were to find an appropriate place in the comity of nations, it would have to redefine its geopolitical identity and cultural individuality as was felt by leaders of the Indian renaissance from the late eighteenth century onwards. The intellectual and cultural interface between the British and Indian intellectuals in geographical areas where the former had acquired direct control perhaps led to this broad consciousness. The initial processes of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic connections among the colonial powers in India at that time, such as the British, the French, the Portuguese and, to some extent, the Danish and the Dutch, made the Indian intellectual and economic

elite aware of a world beyond the traditional political and diplomatic cognition of the international community by India. Such cognition was limited perhaps to Turkey at the one end and South-East Asia at the other till the European powers came to India.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the earliest and the most impressive articulator of the terms of reference required for India to be a part of the world at large which was coming closer due to the expanding travel facilities and the increasing speed of communications between different parts of the globe. The intellectual side-effects of activities of Indian entrepreneurs such as the earlier Tagores or the Jorasanko family, who came to know about the Industrial Revolution and the new economic trends permeating Europe, led to a realisation that India could not remain isolated from the macro-level political and economic forces at work at the international level. The consequence was the urge to learn English, the desire to emulate British political institutions, to eliminate the negative and pernicious orthodoxies of religions practised in India and to visualise an India which would be similar to the nation-states of Europe. Raja Ram Mohan Roy as well as Dwijendranath Tagore, the founder-leaders of the Brahmo Samaj movement, advocated India's modernisation and its establishing relations with other societies to meet the foregoing objectives. It could be said that this was the first phase of India's developing an international consciousness and acquiring aspirations to become a part of the modern world.

This phase was characterised by curiosity about the Western world, by being impressed by the military, technological and economic power of the European countries and by being in awe of the West and the political influence and the reach of their power in different parts of the world. All these factors culminated in a desire to bring about a metamorphosis in Indian society and the Indian polity in a manner in which India, then in a subordinate partnership with England, would merge into the international community.

The second phase in the evolution of India's international consciousness could be traced back to the aftermath of the Indian

Mutiny of 1857. Several parts of India had become familiar with Europe in general and Britain in particular over a period of nearly 100 years by then. This familiarity, and the resulting knowledge about the politico-military motivations of the colonial power, led to general discontentment in North and Central India, resulting in the Mutiny. There was a fundamental change in the attitude of the British towards their Indian subjects after the Mutiny, not only in terms of political postures and administrative practices, but also in terms of cultural, intellectual and psychological attitudes. A pernicious sense of racial superiority and intellectual arrogance began to permeate not only the British Government, but also the migrant British population in India. The previous comparatively harmonious social relationship between the foreigners and Indians was replaced by the aforementioned negative attitudes. The expansion of Christian missionary activities, backed up by the political authority of the colonial regimes in India (not only in British India but also in the residual pockets of Portuguese and French colonies in subcontinental India), accentuated the processes of the rulers looking down upon the natives, questioning the very existence of their culture, the value of their literature and the relevance of their social mores. In the second half of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century, an Indian underpinning to the people's identity, an Indian religio-cultural integrity and an urge to define a nationhood in Western terms, but rooted in Indian history, became the hallmarks of the the Indian value system and the Indian religious and intellectual renaissance that characterised the subcontinent which comprised two broad strands in terms of attitudes and reactions towards other countries and foreign societies. One strand could be found in linear continuity and in the attitudes and movements initiated by Indian leaders from the nineteenth century onwards. This strand consisted of emulating the West, trying to adopt and adapt Western value systems and Western institutions to the Indian milieu. This strand found expression in the ideologies, movements and attitudes of the newly emerging middle classes in urban British India. On the other hand, the second strand threw up an assertive reaction to the arrogance

of the Western rulers. There was an emphasis on not just the relevance, but also importance, of basic Indian values. There was a passionate questioning of Western analyses and assessments regarding India's history, its intellectual heritage and its cultural and religious identity. Swami Vivekananda, Maharshi Dayanand, Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali and Justice Akbar Allahabadi personified the essential characteristics of the second strand.

The increasing exposure of the Indian intelligentsia to Western political writings added another dimension to India's awareness of the wider world. The gradually increasing number of Indians going to England for study or for economic purposes contributed to this awareness. This sense of self-identity and the desire to make such an identity known to the rest of the world received a fillip due to the work of Western scholars, specially British and German scholars, on Indian history and the Indian scriptural texts, and also due to the translation of the works of classical Indian literature into English and other Western languages. The works of Max Mueller, Professor William Jones and Sir William Wilson Hunter are illustrative of the inputs which the collective psyche of Indians received, making them rediscover their identity in a contemporary perspective at that point of time. While individuals such as Sir Syed Ahmed, Surendra Nath Banerjee and Dadabhai Naoroji personified the first strand (described earlier), the second strand found expression not only through the individuals whom I have already mentioned, but also in the rise of cultural and religious movements and nationalistic Indian literature in different parts of British India. The synergy of these impulses ultimately led to the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885. At that stage, India witnessed the beginnings of an organised political party capable of articulating Indian aspirations and expectations not only regarding domestic affairs but also *vis-à-vis* India's attitude towards the rest of the world.

An analysis of interaction between the Indian National Congress and the British authorities is not the purpose of this book. The purpose here is to trace the patterns of cognition about the outer world, as they became apparent, during the Indian freedom

movement. Looking back to the period from the second half of the nineteenth century to the end of the Second World War, the following factors could be described as the 'triggers' activating India's external concerns. The first, of course, was the impulse to persuade the British Government to give Indians an increasing participatory role in their own governance. The second element was the predicament of migrant Indian labour communities in British-administered territories outside India where they were sent as indentured labour from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. The third element was utilisation of Indian military manpower for furthering the imperial objectives of the British Government in different parts of the world. Mahatma Gandhi and Gopal Krishna Gokhale got involved in ameliorating the predicament of Indian communities in different parts of Africa. They came in touch with foreign governments and eminent foreign personalities, which made them aware of the importance of links with the external world in furthering Indian causes and getting support for Indian concerns. Gandhiji's experiences during the Boer War (in South Africa) and his assuming the leadership of the Indian National Congress immediately after the end of the First World War made him conscious about the possibilities of utilising India's contributions to the British Empire and for demanding an appropriate role for India in the British scheme of things.

A British Indian delegation being given separate representation in the post-First World War international conferences and deliberations and India's being allowed the role of a founding member of the League of Nations intensified India's international consciousness and initiated Indian experiences in foreign relations. These developments germinated ideas which, in the period between the First and Second World Wars, crystallised into Indian foreign policy orientations. This embryonic and emerging Indian worldview could be summed up as follows. First, India, being the most important constituent element of the British Empire, deserved an appropriate dominion status and recognised identity in the British imperial system. Secondly, India had to be self-governing under the umbrella of the British Empire if it were to achieve the above

status and if it were expected to contribute to the stability and the strength of the British Empire. Thirdly, India wished to evolve into a modern nation-state, with modern democratic political institutions. And, fourthly, India expected to be treated as an equal by other dominions in the British Empire and, by extension, by other countries which had dealings with other British dominions. These aspects constituted the moderate initial framework of India's foreign policy till about 1920, if one may assess it in general terms.

The period between 1920 and 1946 was crucial in that India became more aware of international political and economic trends as well as the ideological undercurrents influencing them. This awareness resulted from factors such as greater self-government being granted to the Indians by the British between 1909 and 1935, the participation of the Indian armed forces in the First World War and a number of young Indians, who had their education in the West (in countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Egypt) returning to India and becoming participants in the political movements in India of one hue or another. The list of such persons who later emerged as national leaders in India and Pakistan in the 1940s and 1950s is too long to be detailed. The prominent among them such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, M.N. Roy, Zakir Hussain, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, and Liaqat Ali Khan, are acknowledged contributors to the psychological and intellectual foundations of foreign policies of India and Pakistan. Momentous events such as the Bolshevik Revolution (leading to the conversion of Czarist Russia into the Soviet Union), radical political trends generated in Muslim countries, manifested in the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire by Kamal Ataturk, the early military successes of Japan against Czarist Russia in the first decades of the twentieth century attracted the attention of the Indian intelligentsia and the political circles. This attention led to a certain amount of involvement in some of these events leading to India acquiring nationalist orientations in its international consciousness.

At another level, the US President Woodrow Wilson's 14 points as guiding principles for structuring a new world order —

particularly his emphasis on the principles of self-determination and his implied opposition to imperialism and colonialism — made an impact on Indian political thinking. The Indian leadership felt that India was not getting what it thought was its due in terms of autonomy and self-government in return for Indian support to the British war effort between 1914 and 1918. This sense of deprivation heightened political awareness and generated impulses in the Indian national movement about the importance of India establishing contacts with peoples and countries beyond the confines of the British Empire, and in garnering their support to attain India's objectives of progressive self-government.

The sanctuary and the support which some sections of Indian freedom fighters found in the United States, Japan and South-East Asia made Indians aware of the potentialities of international linkages to further Indian political aspirations. Participation by Indian leaders in the deliberations of the League of Nations and in the Round Table Conferences held in London between 1929 and 1931 (about self-government for India) and the rise of radical and nationalist forces in West Asia augmented India's comprehensions about forces at work in international politics.

The replacement of the imperial family of China by Dr. Sun Yat Sen, Pandit Nehru's participation (in February 1927) in the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities held at Brussels, as a representative of the Indian National Congress, and his later participation in the Committee of the League of Nations against Imperialism at Cologne in Germany, shaped his thought processes on international relations. Nehru visited the Soviet Union late in 1927. He came back obviously impressed by political happenings there in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. His convictions on anti-imperialism and colonialism, on the desirability of political power vesting with the masses in operational terms, on the imperatives of socio-economic justice and on the necessity of networking of international connections in support of these objectives emanated from his European sojourn in 1926-27.

It was on Nehru's return to India at the end of this European visit that Gandhiji entrusted him with the responsibility of

formulating the foreign policy terms of reference of the Indian National Congress. Nehru created the Foreign Affairs Cell of the INC, and brought in people such as Ram Manohar Lohia and Dr. Syed Mehmood to work with him in this cell. He also involved Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in shaping Congress's foreign policy vision, particularly in respect of India's relations with the Islamic world in the context of India's own large Muslim population. The segment of time between 1933 and 1946 crystallised India's views on foreign relations manifesting in them India's foreign policy in the immediate aftermath of India attaining independence.

Epoch-making developments — such as the rise of Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy; Adolf Hitler's racism and militarism, Benito Mussolini's imperialist policies in North-East Africa (Ethiopia especially), the competition among the British, the French and the Germans for influence in the Gulf and in West Asia, and the Spanish Civil War — were observed and analysed with interest by Nehru and his associates in terms of their international implications. The eruption of the Second World War in 1939 resulted in India having to make choices. This was an interesting point in time as a schism emerged in India's perceptions and orientations on foreign relations.

Three prominent trends emerged. First, a section of the Congress led by Gandhiji and Nehru, while opposed to British imperialism were even more opposed to the pernicious expansionist and violent forces represented by Hitler, by Mussolini, and by the Japanese military establishment. Second, another segment of the Congress led by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose felt that since India's overriding objective was to free itself from British rule, India should not bother about the ideological foundations of powers such as Germany, Italy and Japan. The adherents of this line of thought strongly felt that India should take advantage of the conflict between the established imperialist powers such as England, France and Belgium on the one hand and the aspirants to imperial power such as Germany, Italy and Japan on the other. They also asserted that India should seek cooperation from these latter powers to push the British out of India.

Netaji's perception was that India could remain firm in its democratic orientations even if it took the assistance of these neo-imperialists to become free. Netaji translated these thoughts into action during the Second World War, details of which are too well-known to need a description here. The third divisive trend in India's foreign policy was fashioned by the communists of India who showed an incapacity for independent thinking. They merely toed the Soviet line in reacting to the momentous events of the 1930s and 1940s in Europe, shifting their stance along with the Soviet Union in relation to Germany and the Axis powers.

The important nuance in the thinking of the political party dominating the Indian freedom struggle, namely, the Indian National Congress, was that while it was willing to be supportive of the war effort of the Western democracies against the Axis powers, India was clear in its demand that the support was conditional to the Indian demand for independence being met and India being allowed to take its legitimate place in the international community as an independent nation. India had given notice about its changed aspirations in the 1920s itself, when Jawaharlal Nehru declared "full independence" as the objective of the Indian national movement during the Lahore Congress session in 1929. This conditionality found operational expression in the Quit India Resolution of 1942 and the resulting last phase of Satyagraha before India became independent. India considered supporting the cause of democracy against the Axis powers as a concomitant to its own freedom struggle, though the British and even the Americans viewed the 1942 civil disobedience movement as an unjustified exercise in pressurising the British when they were facing a critical predicament. Some Western analysts even accused India of contradiction and duplicity. But from the Indian point of view, it was the first exercise in structuring a multidimensional foreign policy approach which, while being supportive of larger legitimate ideological stances, at the same time, insisted on establishing international relations and fulfilling national interests.

As the Second World War ended, and India's independence became a realistic possibility, Indians took note of emerging

political impulses and strategic orientations in international politics. India assessed in detail the implications of signing the Atlantic Charter, the result of the great powers conference in Yalta, subsequent meetings of the US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the English Prime Minister Winston Churchill with the kings of Iran and Saudi Arabia and the Potsdam Conference, which initiated the Truman era, and led to the creation of Pax Americana, which was to last practically for the rest of the twentieth century.

India also noted the disintegration of the Soviet-US alliance and the beginnings of the Cold War. The Indian leadership was the first among the emerging power elites in the developing countries to comprehend the profound implications of the acquisition of nuclear weapons by countries and their being used with devastating effect. India also realised the significance of the groundswell of freedom movements emerging in South-East Asia and portions of Africa and was deeply conscious of the interconnection between the freedom movement of India and the freedom movements in other countries, if a new world order based on the principle of justice was to have a stable future. Nehru's vision of the world and the role that India would play in the post-Second World War period was based on Indian perceptions of the foregoing events and trends. He articulated the Indian vision succinctly in a national broadcast from New Delhi on 7 September 1946, three weeks after India achieved dominion status: "The world in spite of its rivalries and hatred and inner conflicts moves inevitably towards closer cooperation and the building up of a world of Commonwealth. It is in this one world that free India will work; a world in which there is the free cooperation of free peoples, and no class or group exploits another." This was the overarching attitude of India towards the world around it at the time of its achieving independence.

Several poignant questions cropped up: What were our perceptions of international equations? What did we think of our position in the emerging scheme of things? What were the equations which we fashioned? How did we define the terms of

reference of our policies to cope with the international situation for the first time in nearly a thousand years as an independent people and as a subcontinental united sovereign Indian Republic? The manner in which we responded to these challenges initiated the basic trends in our foreign policy. The next chapter attempts to throw light on our initiation into foreign relations and the motivations which animated our foreign policy at its inception.

2

India Joins the Comity of Nations

Tracing our journey through the pathways of international politics over the last 50 years cannot be a mechanical exercise. A purely existentialist analysis will result in truncated perceptions and even misjudgements. Before we discuss as to what precisely happened and how these happenings took place in India's external relations, an inquiry as to why our foreign policy had certain orientations would be relevant. Such an inquiry would provide a logical perspective about the dynamics of India's foreign policy.

Several factors have been instrumental in shaping India's foreign policy. First, perceptions of the Indian leadership of international politics were deeply influenced by the freedom struggle of the people of India against colonialism and imperialism. Secondly, Indian leaders viewed the world through the prism of the political, economic and ideological contradictions that resulted in two world wars which many of them had witnessed. Thirdly, they were convinced that political contradictions and economic inequalities could not be confined or compartmentalised in order to prevent tendencies of competition, conflict and violence affecting

the entire international community. Fourthly, the unique nature of their non-violent struggle for freedom, contrasting with the nature of other similar movements along with their resisting aggression and domination, led them to realise that each people and each society conceive their own aspirations, define the terms of reference for their respective struggle and fashion their own methods to meet their objectives. There could be no imposed or uniform formula to manage the diversities of a complex world. Fifthly, in consequence of the above realisation they were convinced that international harmony, peace and stability could be achieved only through factors such as a process of reasoning together, a commitment to cooperation rather than confrontation and an attitude that differences and diversities need not automatically result in adversarial stances between states and societies. Sixthly, their national experience and their perceptions of international relations convinced them that foreign relations, if they were to contribute to peace, stability and well-being of the international community, had to be responsive to the profound aspirations of common people all over the world. The process can no longer remain an esoteric exercise in structuring politico-military balances and furthering expansionist or acquisitive objectives of more powerful countries against the weaker ones. External relations had to be democratised; they had to become a participatory phenomenon in which public opinion played a vital role.

The foregoing undercurrents in Indian thinking had commenced finding expression from 1927 onwards. The Madras session of the Indian National Congress in 1927 demanded the withdrawal of Indian troops sent by England to other countries for the furtherance of British imperialist aims. In the 1928 Calcutta session of the Congress, one of the resolutions declared: "The struggle of the Indian people for freedom is part of the general world struggle against imperialism, and that Congress had decided to develop contacts with other countries and peoples who also suffer under imperialism and desired to combat it."

Responding to the rise of Fascism and Nazism in the early 1930s, Jawaharlal Nehru was prophetic. He pronounced his

assessment: "These movements based as they are on hatred and violence and dreams of war would lead to a world war unless they were checked in time. The Congress firmly opposed German occupation of Czechoslovakia and Franco's overthrow of the representative republican government in Spain." The Indian National Congress offered full cooperation at this point of time to progressive forces all over the world in their struggle against imperialism and Fascist repression.

It is generally forgotten, but it must be kept in mind, that the Indian National Congress organised a boycott of Japanese goods and sent a medical mission to China under Dr. Kotnis in support of the Chinese people's resistance against the Japanese aggression. Jawaharlal Nehru himself visited China in 1939, establishing contacts with Chinese nationalist leaders. India's response to the Balfour Declaration aiming at the displacement of the Palestinian Arabs from their homeland signified the Indian National Congress giving full support to the Palestinian people long before Israel came into existence, for the establishment of a united, independent Palestinian state. Early in 1939, at the Tripura session of the Indian National Congress, the party affirmed that world peace and progress depended on the "imperative destruction of Fascism". There was a deep internationalist undercurrent in Indian foreign policy preceding India's becoming independent, and in the years immediately thereafter. Nehru summed up this outlook when he declared in 1942: "In India, you and I are working for our own freedom. But we think not of free India, we envisage a free and great India that will work for the freedom of the world and for the peace of the world." Nehru personally, and the Congress Foreign Policy Cell under his guidance, were instrumental in ensuring a continuous process of educating Indian public opinion about the need for India to become aware of its position as a part of a larger international community. He assiduously worked at broadening the perspective of, and expanding the understanding of, the complexity of international relations in the Working Committee and the Subjects Committee of the Congress sessions. Despite somewhat unidimensional foreign policy orientations of the

Communist Party of India, it also imparted an awareness about the world beyond England and West Europe in the Indian public mind. The large-scale participation of Indian soldiers in the Second World War and the campaign of the Indian National Army led by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to achieve India's independence with Japanese military assistance amplified the public awareness about India's being a point of strategic and imperial interests and Indians being part of a larger international community.

What then were the attitudes and orientations of India in 1946 at the intellectual and psychological levels with regard to external relations? There was a profound sense of collective identity and definite recognition of a collective self about India as a sovereign member of the comity of nations. The geographical size and the demographic and natural resources were considered contributory factors to India's sense of its importance. This sense of importance was accentuated by a pride in India's civilisational past and the economic and political influence which Indian imperia had before the advent of the British in the subcontinent. The moral high ground, which figures such as Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi envisioned for India, influenced articulate sections of Indian public opinion in their perceptions of India's position in the international community. Vivekananda had repeatedly stressed that India's future role in the world was that of "a messenger of peace, that of a catalyst for creating a just and moral world order". He also pointed out that the basis of Indian influence need not be power or military might or economic riches. A commitment to freedom based on a commitment to democracy predicated on safeguarding diversity and individual freedoms and a commitment to encourage reason and impulses of peace in international relations were the terms of reference which Mahatma Gandhi provided for Indian foreign policy. He went on to say: "I would rather that India perished than that she wins freedom on the sacrifice of truth.... Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded. I am not pleading for India to practise non-violence because it is weak. I want her to practise non-violence being fully conscious of its

power. No training in or collection of arms is required for the realisation of this strength."

Jawaharlal Nehru's statements on relations with other nations during the first decade of our freedom consolidated these intellectual undercurrents in India's foreign policy. In a radio broadcast from London, on 12 January 1951, he declared: "What we need is a passion for peace and for civilised behaviour. It is not the temper of war that we want." Then, again speaking at the Dyanamo Stadium in Moscow, on 22 June 1955, he clarified: "Peace in our view is not merely abstention from war but an active positive approach to international problems and relations, leading first to the lessening of the present tension through an attempt to solve our problems by methods of negotiations, and then, to a growing cooperation between nations in various ways. Cultural and scientific contacts, increase in trade and commerce and exchange of ideas, experience and information." The consequence of Nehru's approach was a widely shared feeling that India had a catalytic role to play in establishing a moral and just world order ensuring peace and cooperation all over the globe. Indians expected the world to acknowledge this role of their country not only in terms of the policies that it would follow but also in terms of the historical and civilisational orientations of Indian socio-economic, politial and cultural values.

The second characteristic of the collective Indian foreign policy mindset was that India had an ideological as well as an operational role to play in world affairs to eradicate imperialism, colonialism and all forms of discrimination. The support extended by India to Indonesia, to other countries of South-East Asia and later to the African countries in their freedom struggle reflected this attitude. India felt both a responsibility and an obligation to be supportive of liberation struggles and to oppose all forms of domination. This approach was also based on an assessment that India's independence and stability could not be sustained if other peoples remained under the imperial and colonial yoke and were subject to domination and discrimination.

The first step towards assuming this catalytic role was taken by India in convening the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi on 23 March 1947. A large number of political leaders from various Asian countries, most of them still under foreign rule, attended this conference. The indivisibility of peace and security in the international context was categorically asserted by Jawaharlal Nehru while speaking at this conference: "Peace can only come when all countries are free and also when human beings everywhere have freedom and security and opportunity. Peace and freedom therefore have to be considered both in their political and economic aspects."

The memories of the British imperial rule and the trauma of partition engendered a commitment to democracy, to separate religion from politics (secularism), and to uphold legitimacy of diversity and plurality in nation-states. India hoped that the newly emerging independent states of Asia and Africa would be democratic, would avoid irrational religious extremism and would be resistant to centrifugal ethnic or linguistic or religious forces which could erode their composite cultural, multiethnic and territorial identities.

The disintegration of the alliance between the "democratic" and the "progressive" forces and the emergence of the Cold War between Western democracies and East European countries, led by the Soviet Union, were disappointments to India. Leaving aside concerns about macro-level tensions which the Cold War was to generate, Indian leadership was legitimately apprehensive about India becoming subjected to extraneous and external influences, if the nation were to take sides in this ideological confrontation. Nehru's assessment was that India should keep away from Cold War power politics, should remain committed to its own democratic terms of reference for national consolidation and should cooperate with all the countries, regardless of their respective ideological or political affiliations in order to maintain international peace and stability and to meet India's own national interests. This approach evolved into "non-alignment" becoming the guiding principle of India's foreign policy, and, ultimately, found manifestation in the creation of the Non-aligned Movement.

As a result of India not having much direct experience of "realpolitik" or of complex strategic predicaments which independent countries face, we had a somewhat idealistic and romantic approach towards security and power equations. At the time of achieving dominion status, and for a period of about one year thereafter, India did not face any major threat to its territorial integrity or politico-economic security. The first presumption was that since India has no expansionist or aggressive designs against any other country, India would not face any threats. The second presumption was that since India was not taking sides in the Cold War and was desirous of cooperation and friendly relations with all countries, Cold War equations would not have any negative implications for India. The third presumption was that the just political and moral terms of reference adopted by the leading powers at the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations provided both the moral and procedural basis for resolving conflicts and tensions through negotiations and peaceful means on the merits of the points at issue.

The intrigues of certain powers which encouraged some of the Princely States of India to resist accession to the Indian Republic and the manner in which important world powers responded to the Pakistani aggression in Jammu and Kashmir in 1947-48 made India learn soon enough that the aforestated predications were not entirely valid. The lesson was learnt only after India went through negative experiences on the Kashmir issue, but more of that later.

Curiously, and with the benefit of hindsight, one can say that, mistakenly, India also had a feeling of self-confidence about itself as the inheritor of British political position and power in South Asia. We had given ourselves a Democratic Republican Constitution. Our precondition that we should be accepted as a Republic if the British wanted us to remain in the Commonwealth and our having a stable administration and a standing army which constituted part of the victorious Allied forces instilled in us the feeling that we were and we should be considered a power to be reckoned with in Asia, specially in South-East Asian affairs. Since our resources were

comparatively better, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in relation to all other emerging countries in the region, there was a certain complacency about security and strategic matters in our minds.

There was also a feeling that we merited a leadership role at the regional level on contemporary politico-cultural grounds and at the global level because of the moral stance which we had adopted on world issues, a stance we considered logical. The politico-cultural grounds on which we presumed to merit a leadership role were as follows: first, India was the first among the former colonies to achieve freedom and that India's active support to the freedom struggles of other colonies in Asia and Africa had contributed to their successes. So, India expected to be a focus of attention and a reference point for policies and attitudes of these countries. Next, the reasoning behind claiming the leadership role on the basis of aesthetics was a certain perception of history that Indian contributions (both qualitative and quantitative) to the culture and civilisation of other Asian countries contained a linkage because of which India would be looked up to as a point of origin of the socio-cultural foundations of Asian countries. The spread of major spiritual and religious thoughts and resulting cultural movements throughout Asia occurred through the subcontinental Indian land mass. This phenomenon merited a special position for India in the post-colonial period amongst other colonies which also became independent countries. Interestingly, we had no realistic understanding of the economic forces at work or the economic imperatives relevant to India's own well-being. Nor did we have any sophisticated comprehension about the emerging strategic competitions in the international arena and the consequent politico-strategic equations which were being forged by the world powers. It was the Indian view that given the international stature of leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru and given India's declared commitment to principles of democracy, non-confrontation and cooperation, these complexities could be managed without any major difficulty. However, within the first decade of achieving independence, India was to realise that this assumption was wrong.

It was on the basis of idealistic illusions and disarming faith in morality as the basis of politics that India stepped on to the stage of international affairs. Nehru summed up the approach in an interview to the *New York Times* on 1 September 1946 wherein he said that India would develop an active concern in world affairs by pursuing an independent policy compatible with its own national interests. Nehru's biography (by Sarvapalli Gopal) comments that though this statement of objectives remained true throughout Nehru's years in office, there was little precision and definitiveness about these objectives in the initial years. Gopal goes on to say that India's foreign policy orientation consisted primarily of a vague, rather a grandiose, hope of closer ties between Asian countries, perhaps even the formation of two or three Asian Federations. Nehru in an interview to the *National Herald* (17 August 1946) expressed the hope that India could play a positive role in the vast geographical stretch from Australia and New Zealand to East Africa, and as the first of the Asian and African countries to have gained freedom, India could adopt a "non-committal" and "influential" stand on international issues.

How did the world respond to this idealistic stance of India? This assumption of a somewhat didactic role by India to shape the Cold War world evoked a sharp reaction from some of the big powers. Western democracies, led by the United States of America, were not pleased with India's intention of following its own separate path in the conduct of its foreign relations, and its policy of national consolidation. The USA, the principal Western power which was instrumental in facilitating India's freedom, expected it to join them in the ideological confrontation against the Soviet Union. This expectation was based on India's historical connections with Britain and the feeling that India in terms of both ideological orientations and of gratitude towards the former colonial power would be inclined to be part of the Western politico-strategic arrangement. India's insistence on keeping aloof from the Cold War and, more importantly, India's advocacy that all the newly emerging independent countries should follow the same path irritated the West and created political distances from, and economic reticences about, India. The Soviet

Union (then ruled by Josef Stalin) continued to look at the developments in India and the Indian leadership with jaded, blinkered and ideologically tinted eyes. India's freedom struggle was perceived as a movement of the urban bourgeoisie which had no roots in furthering the aspirations of the common people of India and none in fostering the interests of the Indian masses. The Indian leadership, Mahatma Gandhi downwards, continued to be described in the Soviet encyclopaedia as representatives of the acquisitive middle class and camouflaged agents of imperialist and colonial ideologies. Stalin never met the first Indian Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, and reluctantly received the second Indian Ambassador, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, only twice (as far as one recalls). The Soviet Union under Stalin continued to view India as a potential base for strategic activities of the West, which was challenging the Soviet influence in Central and West Asia. Nehru's dissociating himself from the Cold War confrontation and his willingness to establish cooperative relations transcending Cold War considerations made no impression on the Soviet Union and its allies between 1947 and 1953. Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, deeply conscious of the Islamic ingredients of the composite Indian identity and the requirement to disprove the advocacies of the two-nation theory which created Pakistan, attached great importance to India's relations with Islamic countries spread over South Asia, the Gulf, West Asia and North Africa. Most of the Muslim countries were still under some colonial tutelage or the other; they were also enmeshed in strategic relationships with various European powers. The response of the Muslim countries in the initial period of India's independence was both cautious and reticent because they viewed India through the prism of the partition and the creation of Pakistan. They were not sufficiently informed about the aberrations and misunderstandings which led to the creation of Pakistan. Some more time had to pass before a stable pattern of relationship and mutual understanding could emerge between India and the Muslim countries.

India became a participant in international relations as a sovereign state perhaps without fully understanding the complexities involved and the factors of competition, aggrandisement and power

equations which governed such relations. As already mentioned, imbued with the high moral and liberal orientations of the freedom struggle, India approached the tasks of diplomacy and fashioning foreign policy with unrealistic idealism, and the simple predication that India's moral, non-competitive and just stand would evoke a similar response from the world powers, particularly as India declared itself uninterested in their approach to the controversies and confrontations in various parts of the globe.

India's approach to the world around it was influenced by its sense of self-importance and an amount of self-righteousness. There was a philosophical conviction that India, which was the largest country emerging from colonialism to independence, had a role to play on the international stage and a message to give to the international community which was supposed to evoke support and even an admiring response. There was no awareness about the abiding amoral governing factors in international relations, which influenced all nation-states, their role and their image, primarily depending on their economic strength and their politico-military power. That India succeeded to play the role it was expected to in influencing world events in a significant manner, despite the foregoing limitations, was entirely due to the reputation and international stature of Jawaharlal Nehru and his capacity of functioning as a macro-level balancing factor in the controversies affecting the world in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. It was a self-confident India whose foreign policy was backed up by national consensus. But it was also an India which had an imperfect comprehension of the realities of international politics that emerged on the world scene.

While assesing the twin dimensions of self-confidence on the one hand and imperfect comprehension of realpolitik characterising India's foreign policy in the initial stages after independence on the other, it would be relevant to speculate on the deeper philosophical underpinnings of such policy in terms of civilisational history. India's foreign policy was governed perhaps by two schools of thought down the centuries going back almost to the fourth century B.C. One school of thought (or orientation) was articulated

in legendary terms by Shakuni (a character in the epic Mahabharata known for his expertise with dice) and in terms of recorded history by Chanakya, the great political mentor of, and minister during the reign of, Emperor Chandragupta Maurya. Using power as an instrumentality to further one's objectives and to resort to stratagems and conspiratorial measures to further one's political interests was considered a necessity by these historical figures.

On the other hand, there was the philosophical tradition on the management of political controversies and interstate relations advocated by the sage Vidura and by Lord Krishna himself. As mentioned in the Mahabharata, reason and compromise should govern political relations and force should be avoided in the management of such relations till it becomes absolutely unavoidable. Vidura and Krishna pleading with Prince Duryodhana to avoid the war at Kurukshetra is embedded in the collective subconscious memory of Indians. This approach to life in general and politics in particular found powerful expression later in the teachings of Lord Buddha. Our militant and aggressive nationalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries descended from the Chanakyan school of thought, whereas the moderate, rational and non-violent orientations in Indian nationalism and the Indian freedom struggle originated in the teachings of Buddha and his philosophical successors — like Emperor Ashoka. It is, however, very important to note that the moderate and rational approach to politics and interstate relations in each stage of the evolution of Indian history as an independent political entity followed a process of political consolidation which required the application of concepts and prescriptions of Chanakya who pre-dated Machiavelli by nearly 2000 years. (Chanakya's teachings on statecraft could have taught Machiavelli a lesson or two.)

That an appropriate response to the compulsions of realpolitik to achieve national consolidation and territorial unity was proved again in the first four years of India's independence. These were the years when India fashioned an independent foreign policy and commenced implementing it. In this context, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's sterling contribution has to be specially recognised. Patel's

sterling contributions to India's freedom movement and later to the stabilisation of the country as its first home minister. and deputy prime minister are generally acknowledged but the contributions which he made to foreign relations by structuring India's territorial unity and defining its geopolitical identity have not been taken sufficient note of as a foreign policy and national security exercise.

The political processes and negotiations which Sardar Patel was responsible for and which led to the integration of the 536 Princely States of India into the Indian Republic was essentially a foreign policy exercise. It should be remembered that legally and politically all the Princely States of India became independent, sovereign territorial entities, i.e., the moment the British withdrew from the subcontinent. With the end of the suzerainty of the British Crown, all the agreement and the treaty arrangements between the Crown and these Princely States lapsed. These states reverted to their respective status of independence which obtained between the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth century. The legal status of the Viceroy was quite distinct from that of the Governor-General of India. While the Viceroy administered the British-held territories directly, he functioned as the principal agent of the British monarchy dealing with the Indian princes within a separate framework of relations.

Sardar Patel indulged in a masterly exercise of negotiations, persuasion, of offering privileges and perquisites which resulted in practically all the Princely States acceding to the newly created Indian dominion which ultimately emerged as the independent Republic. It is remarkable that India had to indulge in coercive force only in relation to Hyderabad and Junagadh in this exercise. The military operations in Kashmir were a response to an external politico-military threat. So I do not include the integration of Jammu and Kashmir to India in this category. The credit for all these achievements goes to the vision and political capabilities of Sardar Patel among the Founding Fathers of the Indian Republic. He was perhaps the only one who understood the chemistry of power and the implications of power equations on prospects of political unity and consolidation of a complex civil society such as India's. Pandit

Nehru was able to move on to the more idealistic and rational approach to foreign relations in many ways because the comparatively difficult and unpalatable exercise of persuading the princes to join the Indian dominion had been successfully managed by Sardar Patel. This claim, however, in no way diminishes the creative vision of Nehru which remained a dominant influence on India's foreign policy and strategic thinking. But it should be remembered that Nehru's vision was built on the foundations of the stability and unity brought about by Sardar Patel.

The purpose of this book is to undertake a panoramic survey of 50 years of India's foreign policy and the manner in which certain trends in such policy since independence served the country's interest. A linear chronological perspective would be in order for this exercise. The evolution of India's foreign policy could be assessed in the following chronological time frames: From 1946 to 1954-55; from 1955 to 1962; from 1962 to 1974; from 1974 to 1989; and from 1989 to date.

The following chapters will trace the evolution of India's foreign policy in this chronological order, attempting, at the same time, to recall the motivations and assess the implications of India's external orientations in each of these time modules.

3

India's Emergence on the Stage of International Diplomacy (1946-55)

India's advent on the stage of international relations was a uniquely significant development of the twentieth century. India was the first among the former colonial countries to join the international community as a sovereign state. It was the first country from either Asia or Africa to acquire the independence of options in conducting foreign relations after the Second World War. It was the first country uninvolved in power equations and the evolving Cold War in the post-1945 period to become a member of the international community unencumbered by the burdens of international politics which affected international diplomacy almost since the middle of the nineteenth century. It was also the first country capable of representing the emerging political aspirations of what later came to be known as the "developing world". The Indian leadership of that time was deeply conscious of these ingredients in India's international identity and in the resulting concerns and responsibilities.

While these particular attributes of India as an international entity influenced the initial orientations of its foreign policy, the new

nation had to cope with its more immediate concerns related to national consolidation and national security during the first decade of its independence.

During the first phase — 1946 to 1955 — India's primary concerns were to territorially consolidate its polity which was subject to the possibility of some large and important Princely States opting to remain independent without becoming a part of India; a prospect which would have fragmented the geopolitical cohesion and territorial integrity of the Indian Republic, which was still recovering from the trauma of partition and the creation of Pakistan. The centrifugal predicament in which the Indian dominion was left by the Labour Government in the UK and by Lord Louis Mountbatten was not incidental, if one ruminates in depth on the motivations of the British with the benefit of hindsight. The partition itself could have been avoided had the British Government not deliberately encouraged the communal schism in their Indian imperium. The assiduous encouragement of the Hindu-Muslim divide from the second decade of the twentieth century onwards was spurred by two motivations in the initial stages. The first motivation was to use this division as a means to perpetuate British imperial rule in India. The second motivation in consolidating this divisiveness leading to partition was to perpetuate the imperial myth that India could remain united only under British rule and that it would be fragmented once the British departed. The Cabinet Mission proposals and the ultimate partition of India can be viewed as the British successfully translating their prejudices against the Indians and their sense of exalted self-importance into a political reality. One does not deny that the impatience of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel for achieving independence, and thereby hastening the departure of the British, had contributed to this pernicious success of British imperial policy at the time of Britain's departure. Even more significant was the motive underpinning the ambiguous role of the departing colonial government in relation to the 500 odd Princely States of India. The British Government declared that when they departed, the doctrine of paramountcy would lapse and all the Princely States would be free of their

subordinate imperial obligations; they would revert to their original status of independent entities. There was a geostrategic post-colonial aspiration of the British Government inherent in this policy decision. The expectation of the British Government was that, after partition, Pakistan would emerge as politically and territorially the most cohesive entity in the subcontinent based on religious homogeneity, whereas the Indian dominion would be interspersed with the bigger Princely States opting for independence and sovereign status. If large states such as Hyderabad, Baroda, Travancore, Jammu and Kashmir, Bhopal, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer succeeded in consolidating their independent status, it would be a disjointed Indian dominion criss-crossed by independent Princely States. It is legitimate to speculate that the British hope was that Pakistan, being grateful to Britain for its very existence and the larger Princely States with their century-long connections with the British Government could make the subcontinent an area of substantive British influence, while the dominion of India, consisting of the British Indian provinces, would get marginalised. British encouragement to the larger Princely States to remain independent, if they wished to, was obvious in the immediate aftermath of India being granted dominion status in 1946 and India becoming independent in 1947. It should also be remembered that Mohammad Ali Jinnah had made a formal offer to the Princely States of Rajputana bordering Pakistan guaranteeing their independent status and inviting them to enter into formal diplomatic relations with Pakistan. Pakistan's support to the Nizam of Hyderabad and Kasim Razvi, till their ambitions were neutralised by India's firm action in 1948, need no elaboration. Even small Princely States such as Junagadh and Indore were encouraged to opt for independence, not to mention Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer's attempts at converting Travancore into a sovereign entity.

As mentioned earlier, India's primary foreign policy concern was the territorial consolidation of the Indian Republic. It was a foreign policy matter because even, institutionally, relations between the Government of India and the Princely States of India were dealt with separately by the Viceroy through the Foreign and

Political Department of the Government of India. Sardar Patel succeeded in ensuring the accession of a majority of the Princely States of India to the Indian Republic through a balanced mixture of negotiations and measured use of coercive means when the situation demanded.

Pakistan's initial covert and later direct military intervention in Jammu and Kashmir compounded this particular Indian concern. India learnt its first lesson of realpolitik by this experience; i.e., that constitutional and legal processes are not a sufficient guarantee to maintain the unity and territorial integrity of the nation unless backed up by credible defence capacities.

The second concern of India was based on the realisation that its independence and sovereignty could not be sustained in a vacuum, when other countries and societies remained under colonial rule. From the 1930s onwards, the Indian National Congress had held the view that India's freedom struggle had to be part of a larger movement for the freedom and liberation of other colonial countries in Asia and Africa. Leaders of the Indian National Congress had been in touch with their counterparts of the freedom movements in Africa and South-East Asia from the mid-1930s onwards. Supporting the struggle for the freedom and liberation of colonial peoples and countries therefore became a major plank of India's foreign policy, when India became independent. The Asian Relations Conference, organised by India in March 1947, was the first significant foreign policy initiative that India took in this regard. India supported the freedom struggles of countries in South-East Asia and Africa not only politically but also materially from 1946 till the early 1960s, when practically all the colonial countries became free. India was also a firm supporter of the anti-apartheid movement and also wanted the emergence of a China free of colonial/imperial influence. Vijayalakshmi Pandit was the first person to raise the question of racial discrimination in South Africa at the United Nations soon after India joined this organisation as one of its founding members. India was the first country to recognise the People's Republic of China and to advocate its admission to the United Nations after the débâcle of the progressively unpopular Kuomintang regime.

The third foreign policy problem which India faced during this period (1946-55) was of defining its political and strategic worldview in the ideological and diplomatic conflict between the Western allies led by the United States and the socialist and communist group of nations led by the USSR. Jawaharlal Nehru realised that the emerging Cold War went beyond ideological differences. The alienation between Stalin and Harry Truman after F.D.Roosevelt's death, the division of the world into potential areas of influence between the Soviet Union and the Western allies, at Yalta even before Roosevelt's demise in April 1945 and the Potsdam Agreements finalised by Truman, were correctly perceived by Nehru as indicative of the emerging competition for gaining strategic influence between the socialist camp and the Western powers.

Pandit Nehru was clear that India should not take sides with one bloc or the other in this confrontation which ultimately escalated into a Cold War which lasted for nearly 45 years. He was convinced that India's stability, economic development and its capacity to have balanced political equations which would help in serving its own national interests depended on the leadership opting for an independent, non-aligned stance in foreign policy. Safeguarding India's capacity to exercise options independently, to the extent possible, without being subject to external influences, was imperative to safeguard the country's interests in Nehru's perception. Non-alignment, therefore, became a fundamental term of reference of India's foreign policy. Nehru articulated the rationale of this non-aligned approach in a speech in the Constituent Assembly of India on 8 March 1949: "India is a country with a tremendous vitality which it has shown through its history. It has often enough imposed its own cultural patterns on other countries, not by force of arms, but by the strength of its vitality, culture and civilisation. There is no reason why we should give up our way of doing things, our way of considering things, simply because of some particular ideology which emanates from Europe. I have no doubt at all that we have to learn a great deal from Europe and America and I think that we should keep our eyes and ears completely open.

We should be flexible in mind and we should be receptive, but I have also no doubt at all that we should not allow ourselves, if I may use the words of Gandhiji, 'to be swept off our feet by any wind from anywhere'."

He further observed: "We should approach these problems whether domestic and/or international in our own way. If by chance we align ourselves definitely with one power group, we may perhaps from one point of view do some good, but I have not a shadow of doubt that from a larger point of view not only of India but of world peace, it will do harm. Because we will lose that tremendous vantage ground that we have of using such influence as we possess in the cause of world peace. What are we interested in world affairs for? We seek no domination over any country, domestic or other. Our main stake in world affairs is peace, to see that there is racial equality, and that people who are still subjugated should be free. For the rest we do not desire to interfere in world affairs and we do not desire that others should interfere in our affairs. If, however, there is interference whether military, political or economic, we shall resist it."

He also noted: "It is with this friendly approach that we look at the world. It is not for me to criticise other nations and their policies but I do not see why India should act in a rigid way or should become part of the manoeuvring that is going on in the world. We have to keep aloof from that and at the same time develop closest relations with all the countries. It so happens that because of history and chance our relations, economic and trade, are far greater with some countries than the others. Well, we will continue them, always seeing that they do not come in the way of our growth and do not hamper us in our progress. Otherwise, we keep them so that we can play a very important role in world affairs."

Referring to the threat of another world war, he remarked: "The supreme question that one has today in the world is how we can avoid a world war. Some people seem to think that it is inevitable and therefore they prepare for it and prepare for it not only in a military sense but [also] in a psychological sense and

thereby actually bring the war nearer. Personally, I think that this is a very wrong and very dangerous thing. Of course, no country dare take things for granted and not prepare for possible contingencies. We in India must be prepared for all possible danger to our freedom and our existence. That is so, but to think in terms of inevitability of a world war is dangerous thinking. I should like this House and the country to appreciate what a world war means, what it is likely to mean. It just does not matter who wins in the world war because it will mean such an utter catastrophe for a generation or more that everything that we stand for in the way of progress and advancement of humanity would be put an end to. That is a terrible thing to contemplate and everything should be done to avoid this catastrophe. I feel that India can play a big part and perhaps an effective part in helping to avoid war. Therefore it becomes all the more necessary that India should not align with any group of powers which for various reasons are full of fear of war and prepare for war."

The terms of reference articulated in this speech of Pandit Nehru remain the guiding principles of India's foreign policy.

India's fourth concern was to structure relations with two of its most important neighbours, Pakistan and China, one of whom was manifestly hostile, namely, Pakistan and the other, China, was an uncertain entity with its new communist government. With Jinnah's demise in 1948 and Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination in 1952, the orientations of Pakistan's policies towards India changed, taking on more communal and hostile attitudes. Jinnah's plans to make Pakistan a modern democracy and Liaquat Ali Khan's attempts at interacting with Nehru on problems relating to minorities, distribution of economic resources and stabilising Indo-Pak relations failed in the context of Pakistan's territorial ambitions in relation to Kashmir. Successive governments of Pakistan became increasingly hostile towards India. Pakistan also got enmeshed in the Cold War by allying itself with the United States and becoming a participant in the military alliance systems forged by John Foster Dulles for the containment of the USSR and China. Pakistan's signing of a defence cooperation agreement with the US in 1954

and articulating the view that this bilateral agreement as well as Pakistan's participation in the CENTO (the Baghdad Pact) was to ensure Pakistan's security against Indian aggression congealed the adversary relationship between India and Pakistan. This development occurred despite the fact that India had done nothing negative against Pakistan except for firmly resisting Pakistan's attempt to subvert Kashmir's accession to India. Pakistan's decimating and then driving out most of the Hindu minority from both its wings created a situation of continuing tension between India and Pakistan. Pakistan became an aberrant regional concern of India's foreign policy. The defence relationships established between Pakistan and the United States threatened to bring the Cold War to the Indian subcontinent, a possibility which India was determined to resist. The manner in which Pakistan exploited its connections with the US and the UK to further its illegitimate claims on Jammu and Kashmir created distances not only with that country but also with the Western democracies in India's external relations.

Indian leadership had little familiarity with the new communist power structure of China. There were connections between Chiang Kai Shek and Indian leaders from the 1930s onwards, but Chiang's disappearance from the scene necessitated the establishment of new equations. Nehru was animated by a vision of Asian resurgence, and of Asia emerging as a significant force in international relations on the basis of Sino-Indian friendship and cooperation. This was the conviction which led to India's immediate recognition of communist China and advocating its cause in international fora. The initial Chinese response between 1949 and 1954 was positive. The basic pattern of relations was cooperative and friendly, finding populist expression in the slogan "Hindi Chini, Bhai Bhai". These positive trends in bilateral relations culminated in Nehru's visit to China in 1954 and joint pronouncements by Nehru and Chou En-lai with reference to the agreement embodying the five principles of peaceful co-existence or *Panch Sheel*. These five principles were a definitional expression of the philosophy of non-alignment.

Nehru felt that China's and India's adherence to these principles of the *Panch Sheel* would strengthen the forces of non-alignment and establish a bulwark against the negative implications of the Cold War for developing countries. Later trends and events, however, proved that this optimism was premature and misplaced. By 1954 China had revived its politico-territorial claims on Tibet. There were also indications of China not sharing India's views about Asian consolidation and Asian resurgence in a cooperative framework. Undercurrents of the "Middle Kingdom complex" and a sense of Chinese centrality in Asia began manifesting themselves in bilateral interactions between Nehru and Chou En-lai and also in China's approach towards other Asian countries. India's refusal to participate in the military conflict in Korea under the UN flag and India's measured neutral stance in the conflict between China and North Korea on the one hand, and the US and its allies on the other, during the Korean war, did not help matters. China felt that India was a competitor for Asian leadership which it could not countenance.

The Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955 was a defining event in Sino-Indian relations diverting them to a mutually adversarial groove. US and British intelligence operations to blow up the Air India plane, *The Kashmir Princess,* in which Chou En-lai was to travel from Hong Kong to Bandung aroused China's suspicions. The Chinese Government, having advance information about this planned violence, had Chou En-lai travel secretly by another plane via Burma to Bandung. The blowing up of the plane was a deliberate act to vitiate relations between India and China. Nehru's unselfconscious regional leadership stance at the Bandung Conference and his equally "innocent" attempt of introducing Chou En-lai to the rest of the Afro-Asian leadership at the conference aroused China's sense of pride and hurt Chinese sensitivities. The negative consequences of these developments adversely affected Sino-Indian relations from 1955 onwards.

The fifth foreign policy concern during the initial decade of its independence was India's correct anticipation that the disappearance of colonialism and the emergence of independent

states in Asia and Africa would not end the desire of the former imperial and colonial powers to retain influence over their former colonies in order to meet their long-term strategic and economic interests. Indian foreign policy responded to these concerns as follows:

(1) By adopting a non-aligned stance in the Cold War confrontation.
(2) By assuming a decisive politico-military posture in consolidating the territorial integrity of India *vis-à-vis* Pakistan and some of the recalcitrant Princely States of India.
(3) By attempting to establish equally friendly relations with the US and the Soviet Union.
(4) By cultivating a friendly equation with China.
(5) By initiating moves to unite newly independent countries on matters of common concern so as to ensure that they retained their freedom of option to take decisions on domestic, foreign and defence policies, to the extent possible, without being influenced by world powers or extraneous pressures.

Indian policy stances achieved a fair measure of success in terms of the objectives which New Delhi had in mind in the initial years of its advent into international relations. The immediate problems faced by India in terms of foreign relations were the consolidation of the territorial identity of India and coping with Pakistan's attempt to subvert the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India. The British Government's conniving approach to encourage some Indian Princely States to remain independent and Mohammad Ali Jinnah's blandishments to a number of Indian states either to accede to Pakistan or to remain independent with separate treaty arrangements with his country have been mentioned earlier in this chapter. Some interesting details related to the integration of Indian Princely States merit recall. The Indian National Congress wished the Indian princes to decide on accession to India or Pakistan, or about remaining independent, on the basis of the view of public opinion in their respective territories. The British could

not challenge this democratic advocacy. Jinnah, however, became obstinate about constitutional propriety, arguing that it was not the people or the people's movements in the Princely States which should determine the decisions of the princes, but it was the princes reverting to sovereign status on the lapse of British paramountcy who should take decisions in their sovereign discretion. Jinnah's expectation was that this procedure would enable the Nawabs of Junagadh and Bhopal and the Nizam of Hyderabad to either opt for Pakistan or to become separate entities with special political relations with Pakistan.

Jinnah also nurtured the hope that the princes being given the exclusive power to decide on the future status of their states would enable the Maharajas of Jaisalmer, Bikaner and Jodhpur to declare independence. Jinnah was also sanguine that Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir would not be enthusiastic about acceding to the Indian Union. This was because of the political postures and policy statements made by Hari Singh in the immediate aftermath of the establishment of the dominions of India and Pakistan. He did not expect India to undertake coercive political measures if faced with fragmentation due to the ambitions of the Indian princes. Sardar Patel's purposive and decisive policies, however, negated Pakistani arguments and plans. One by one the Indian Princely States, including those which had some initial reservations, acceded to India. Patel decided on coercive measures in relation to only Junagadh and Hyderabad, though the final action to integrate Hyderabad took place nearly a year after India became independent in 1947. The significant point to be noted is that Sardar Patel succeeded in his mission because of the overwhelming support to integrate with India amongst the people of the Princely States of India.

Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir, however, remained aloof from this general orientation of other Indian princes. Pakistan, instead of letting matters be resolved by political processes, became impatient and decided to neutralise Hari Singh by covert armed intrusion into Kashmir in the autumn of 1947. Pakistan nearly succeeded but for the fact that, under this sudden unexpected

military pressure from Pakistan, Hari Singh decided to accede the state of Jammu and Kashmir to India under the provisions of the Indian Independence Act of the British Parliament. This accession provided the legal basis for India's defending Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of the Indian Republic. Hari Singh's decision would not have succeeded but for the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, led by Sheikh Abdullah, being keen to accede to India rather than to Pakistan at the time of the partition of the subcontinent. India took necessary military steps to push back not only the Pakistan-sponsored tribal invasion but also the Pakistani Army which came to support these tribal invaders. Despite being on the verge of recapturing the whole of the territory of the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir, his commitment to peace and conflict resolution by political means made Nehru take the case to the United Nations. His expectation perhaps was that the manifest and incontrovertible aggression by Pakistan against Indian territory, confirmed and condemned by the United Nations, would strengthen India's political and legal stand on the accession of Kashmir. He also presumed that the United Nation's pronouncements on the controversy in terms of the merits of the issue would pre-empt any further Pakistani moves against India's unity and territorial integrity. He was encouraged in these perceptions and expectations by Lord Mountbatten throughout 1947 and 1948. However, Nehru's somewhat idealistic approach was misplaced and proved to be incorrect. The United Nations, dominated by the US and the UK, reacted to the Indian complaint with pusillanimous negativism, primarily on the basis of motivated British assessments. The British were clearly acting in a partisan pro-Pakistan manner. The Security Council deliberations on the Kashmir issue in 1947 and 1948 clearly showed trends that the UN treated India and Pakistan as equal disputants with rival claims on the same territory, ignoring the constitutional and legal accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India in terms of laws passed by Britain itself. Noel Baker, the British representative at the UN, told the leader of the Indian delegation, Sir Gopala Swamy Iyyangar on 6 February 1948 that, according to his sources, Pakistan had

provided no assistance to the tribal raiders who had invaded Jammu and Kashmir. The British delegation went to the extent of indulging in the spurious and malafide argument that Pakistani intrusion into Kashmir occurred because of the massacre of Muslims instigated by Hari Singh. The British desired the United Nations to arrange for policing the state of Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistani security personnel despite its having acceded to India. The British also refused to recognise the legitimacy of the popular government of Sheikh Abdullah. Only then (mid-February 1948) was Nehru convinced that the UN was playing a pernicious role on the Kashmir issue. Writing to his sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit on 16 February 1948, he observed: "I must say that prepared as I was for untoward happenings, I could not imagine that the Security Council could possibly behave in the trivial and partisan manner in which it has functioned. These people are supposed to keep the world in order. It is not surprising that the world is going to pieces. US and Britain have played a dirty role, Britain probably being the chief actor behind the scene. I have expressed myself strongly to Attlee [Clement Attlee, the Prime Minister of Great Britain] about it, and I propose to make it perfectly clear to the British Government what we think about it. The time for soft and meaningless talk has passed."

Apart from equating India and Pakistan on an issue in which India was the aggrieved party, the injustice was compounded by the Security Council not recognising India's sovereignty over Kashmir. There were resolutions and suggestions that India should displace the Sheikh Abdullah Government, replacing it with a coalition government in which Pakistan would participate. No obligations were to be imposed on Pakistan to withdraw its troops and the tribesmen. A plebiscite was suggested with all authority resting with a plebiscite administrator to be appointed by the United Nations. There were even suggestions that Nehru should agree to a partition of Jammu and Kashmir. The crowning anti-India move was the Security Council wanting to include other issues such as the status of Junagadh, and genocide brought up by Pakistan during the Kashmir debate in terms of reference of the proposed

UN Commission on Kashmir. It was obvious that India had to reject these suggestions. Nehru, nevertheless, agreed to the first UN Commission on Kashmir coming to India and Pakistan to make a factual assessment of the ground realities.

When the United Nations Commission arrived in July 1948, the Pakistan Government acknowledged that it had three brigades of regular Pakistani troops fighting in Kashmir in support of the tribals. This acknowledgement was explained in terms of Pakistan's concerns for the Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir and various other specious arguments. India firmly resisted intrigues at the UN aimed at eroding its territorial integrity, ultimately resulting in the UN Security Council passing a resolution on 13 August 1948 stipulating that there should be a ceasefire and complete withdrawal of Pakistani troops, nationals and tribesmen. The resolution also stipulated that India should begin to withdraw the bulk of its forces after Pakistan had withdrawn all its personnel from Jammu and Kashmir, leaving a residual force to maintain law and order in the whole of Jammu and Kashmir and that the future status of the state should be determined by a plebiscite.

The crucial question that arises at this stage is: Why did Nehru agree to this resolution? The reasons were many. First, this resolution recognised the fact of Pakistani intrusion into Jammu and Kashmir. Second, it was a better resolution than a number of other draft resolutions which were considered at the Security Council, all of which were not only supportive of Pakistan but also aimed at giving its claim on Jammu and Kashmir immediate legitimacy. Third, the alternative would have been a general war with Pakistan in which that nation would have received large-scale support from the United States and the United Kingdom. This last prospect was signalled by the fact that Britain did not object to its officers planning and exercising operational command over Pakistani troops which had intruded into Kashmir. Fourth, India, still dependent for arms and oil supplies on Britain, found that soon after the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir, the British started cutting supplies to India. A general war with Pakistan at a point of time when India was still recovering from the impact of partition and

reduced defence capacities would have been an impractical proposition.

Above all, Nehru was convinced that once the Pakistani intruders withdrew completely, a plebiscite would confirm the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India because of the overwhelming popularity of Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference in Kashmir.

Subsequent events, however, proved many of the aforementioned predictions wrong. Once the tribal marauders sponsored by Pakistan were neutralised and supporting Pakistani troops were pushed back and India went to the United Nations, Sheikh Abdullah began to harbour different views about factors such as the status of Kashmir, its relations with India and his own role in his state's affairs. By 1950-51, Abdullah had commenced resiling from a series of arrangements and agreements which he had consented to. First, he wanted to consolidate the Islamic identity of Kashmir based on the Muslim majority in the Valley. Secondly, he visualised an independent Kashmir with himself as the head of this new state. He did not articulate these motivations in specific terms, but, between 1951 and 1953, his interaction with Panditji and Sardar Patel as well as his public pronouncements reflected this motivation. To cut the story short, he wanted to impeach Maharaja Hari Singh. He refused to come to Delhi and hold discussions to finalise stable constitutional arrangements for Jammu and Kashmir within the framework of the Instrument of Accession and the Indian Constitution. He, instead, met British and American officials and political personalities and put forth views to the effect that his state had acceded to India for tactical purposes of preventing Pakistan's acquiring Kashmir. He also asserted his own political supremacy on the basis of his own terms of reference.

Four significant consequences of this critical change in Abdullah's political attitude were as follows: First was the emergence of communal disharmony in the state. This disharmony was compounded by public perceptions about the death of the Hindu Mahasabha leader, Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, while in detention in Kashmir in 1953. Secondly, the prevailing atmosphere

of suspicion weakened and vitiated the Indian negotiating stance on Kashmir at the United Nations. Third, this state of affairs led to the process of active interference by the United States and the United Kingdom in the affairs of Kashmir which was detrimental to India's territorial integrity and secular identity in strategic terms. And fourth, Pakistan's stand started gaining political legitimacy as the party to the dispute, the legitimacy which it would have lost had the Indian armed forces been allowed to complete their operations to rid the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir of Pakistani military presence. Sheikh Abdullah took the crisis to a flashpoint; he, therefore, was arrested and kept away from Kashmir. Nehru ultimately took responsibility for the state though he was reluctant to get involved in the process. Other leaders such as Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad in Kashmir and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai in Delhi persuaded Pandit Nehru to endorse the firm but unpalatable decision which removed Sheikh Abdullah from the political scene for more than a decade. Kashmir became a problematic issue both in terms of domestic politics and India's foreign policy.

Relations with China also started becoming complex. Despite India's policies supportive of the Chinese Revolution, despite India's advocacy that the Mao Tse-tung regime should replace the Kuomintang representatives at the United Nations, despite Nehru's visiting Beijing (then Peking) in 1954, distances started emerging between India and China from the early 1950s. China had initiated political and diplomatic moves to reclaim its sovereignty over Tibet. Around the mid-1950s Chinese maps started showing parts of India as belonging to China. China's ideological linkages with Stalin's Russia resulted in a comparatively reserved response by China to India's positive gestures to that country. India's deliberately neutral stance on the Korean war was also a factor in this process. The adversary relationship born of these factors crystallised in the second half of the 1950s, culminating in the Sino-Indian war in 1962, but more of that later.

It would be relevant to recall (in parentheses) a principled decision of Nehru which made India miss getting a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. There was a suggestion from the

Americans in the mid-1950s, when the US-Chinese antagonism was at its height in the Cold War context, that India should replace China in the Security Council as a permanent member. With the Kuomintang regime having only a tenuous claim to the Chinese seat at the Security Council and communist China being unacceptable to the US, Washington thought it would achieve three objectives by offering India a permanent seat at the UN Security Council. First, it would reduce the communist presence in the Security Council. Second, India could be won over to the side of the US by being given this important status. Third, it would generate antagonism between India and China if the former accepted the offer.

Pandit Nehru, however, refused to accept the offer for the permanent seat at the cost of China in the context of India's commitment to Asian solidarity and its support for the Chinese government. Given the antagonism which China exhibited towards India from 1956 onwards, one wonders whether by remaining firm on our idealistic stance, we did not lose out on an important opportunity to be permanently in the Security Council, an opportunity for which we are now still struggling, more than 40 years later.

Relations with the US were characterised by disappointment on the part of India and suspicions on the part of Washington. Nehru's visit to the US capital in 1949 was less than successful. The US expected India to line up with the West against Russia, China and other socialist countries in the emerging Cold War scenario. Nehru's refusal to get India enmeshed in power bloc rivalries of the Cold War displeased the Americans. What compounded the situation was Nehru's confident articulation of India's policies from what, in his assessment, was a legitimately high moral ground. Truman found his views unacceptable. Dean Acheson and later John Foster Dulles perceived him as an excruciating hurdle against US strategies meant for structuring of the post-Second World War international order. They also felt that India, with its requirements of defence, technology and economic assistance from the West should not have questioned US policies

and plans. In fact, the West held the belief that this compulsion should have made India more pliable. As India did not live up to these expectations, it had to be kept at arm's length and not be given the necessary support and assistance which would help in its emergence as an important regional power. The USA's political and security interests did not coincide with Indian interests and views about the reordering of the post-colonial, post-World War II world. India's refusal to abide by the US-sponsored United Nations' resolutions on the Korean conflict and to sign the Japanese peace treaty added to the suspicions the US harboured about India. Nehru wanted to be equidistant between the USSR and China on the one hand and the US on the other with regard to the Korean war. He decided not to sign the Japanese peace treaty in the context of (1) the continuing presence of American troops in Japan, (2) the American trusteeship in the Reyukyu and Bonin Islands, (3) the failure of the Western powers to transfer Formosa (Taiwan) to China, and (4) the controversies surrounding the jurisdiction of the Soviet Union over the Kurile and Sakhalin Islands. The US concluded that New Delhi's refusal to sign the Japanese peace treaty indicated a move by India aimed at creating some sort of strategic equation among India, China and Japan and to disrupt US influence in Japan and Taiwan. Since India (in contrast to Pakistan) was not willing to join the Western bloc in the Cold War, technological assistance and defence supplies were also not forthcoming. Britain having to reconcile to India becoming a Republic while remaining in the Commonwealth and India's sending medical rather than a combatant contingent to join the UN forces in Korea, while affirming India's independent foreign policy postures and increasing India's credibility among the newly independent countries in Asia and Africa, resulted in tense and distant relations between India and the principal Western democracies. The political phenomenon of colonialism had disappeared but the colonial and covertly imperial mindset which governed the foreign policies and the strategic planning of the ex-colonial powers and their allies continued. This was the Indian perception at that point of time.

Moving on to relations between India and the USSR, Stalin remained in power in the Soviet Union till 1953. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet state viewed the Indian freedom movement and the policies of India in the immediate aftermath of its independence through the warped prism of ideology structured by Stalin, Vyacheslav Molotov and Andrei Vishinsky. India was of marginal interest to the Soviet Union during the Stalin era. Stalin's erroneous assessment was that the Indian leadership with its colonial and imperial intellectual background and its urban origins could not make India a useful partner of the Soviet Union. Indian support for the Chinese Revolution and India's refusal to enter the Korean conflict on the US's side did not make much of a difference to the Soviet Union's attitudes towards India. Consequently, Indo-Soviet relations remained lukewarm.

Winston Churchill's return to power in the early 1950s did not help India's relations with England, though the residual momentum of the colonial connections and the new Commonwealth equation helped sustain these relations. The UK's refusal to sustain India's defence capacities and the pro-Pakistan tilt of the British foreign and defence establishments on matters related to the apportionment of Indian assets in the UK, defence cooperation between India with the UK and the UK's stand on Kashmir resulted in Indo-British relations remaining adrift with undercurrents of tensions. Moreover, V.K. Krishna Menon's acerbic assertiveness *vis-à-vis* the British, as the Indian High Commissioner in London, only exacerbated matters off and on.

It is remarkable therefore that despite India's charting an independent course in foreign relations for itself and despite the consequent difficulties in India's relations with major power centres of the world at that time, it exerted a major influence on international relations during this very period. India's credibility as a non-partisan and non-aligned country deeply committed to peace and to the declared objectives of the United Nations resulted in the international trust that Panditji inspired.

Such credibility found expression in India being designated as the chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission

which was charged with the responsibility of ascertaining the wishes of about 150,000 North Koreans and Chinese prisoners of war captured by the United Nations forces in the Korean conflict. General Thimmaya was the chairman of this five-nation commission with P.N. Haksar (who later on became principal secretary to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi) as his political adviser. The care of the prisoners of war was entrusted to Indian troops, who oversaw the repatriation process. The second major mediation success of India was the behind-the-scenes role that V.K. Krishna Menon and the Indian Foreign Office played in Geneva in bringing about the Indo-China Peace Agreement after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu by the Vietnamese forces supported by the Chinese and Russians between 1954 and 1955. India's acceptability as a reconciliator and mediator was both remarkable and illogical because this credibility and diplomatic success of India had nothing to do with its economic resources or military power. This high point of India's influence in international relations between 1953 and 1955 was achieved primarily because of the high respect in which Jawaharlal Nehru was held among the newly emerging countries of the world and the moral and idealistic framework of Indian foreign policy which he fashioned. This international response to India was based on Nehru's moral vision of a world order and his conviction that India's larger and long-term interests could be safeguarded on the basis of this eclectic and catholic approach to international politics.

As in the case of the conflict in Korea, so also in the case of the Indo-China crisis, India's successful informal mediatory efforts led to its being named as chairman of the United Nations Control Commission dealing with Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, with Poland and Canada being other members of this commission. Other events of importance between 1954 and 1955 were series of exchanges which Pandit Nehru had with Pakistan to bring about a certain amount of stability in bilateral relations despite the simmering tensions about Jammu and Kashmir. These years also saw the beginnings of India getting closer to the socialist countries, particularly the Soviet Union and China. Nikita Khruschev had

replaced Stalin and India had a new Ambassador in Moscow, K.P.S. Menon (Senior). The practical approach adopted by Menon and the change in the mindset of the Soviet leadership led to the beginning of multidimensional Indo-Soviet relations which were to last till the disintegration of that country in December 1991. Pandit Nehru visited Moscow in the summer of 1954. It was the first major signal that India and the Soviet Union had commenced contentful relations. Panditji invited Khruschev and Bulganin to come to India. That visit took place in 1955. Both Soviet leaders categorically supported India's foreign policy objectives including those on the Kashmir issue. Earlier, Chou En-lai had visited Delhi in June 1954 and Nehru had gone to Beijing for discussions with Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai in October the same year. Records of discussions between Panditji and the Chinese leaders clearly indicate that Nehru had by then no romantic or idealistic views about Sino-Indian relations. He was conscious of China's influence, and also of its great power orientations towards Asia, and the Sino-centric assertive mindset of the Chinese leadership. He was, however, convinced that a friendly working relationship with China was essential for Asian peace and stability.

The period between 1950 and 1955 witnessed the embryonic beginnings of the Non-aligned Movement first at the Colombo conference (1954) and then at the Afro-Asian conference at Bandung in 1955. It was through the instrumentality of these meetings that India developed equations with Indonesia, Egypt, Sri Lanka and China to structure an Afro-Asian and non-aligned vision of the world, resistant to the abrasive competitiveness engendered by the Cold War. It must be mentioned in parentheses that India was instrumental in freeing Nepal from the shackles of the rule of the Ranas and the restoration of constitutional monarchy there. It is a different matter that after the passing away of King Tribhuvan, Nepal lapsed back into a monarchical system where democratic forces remained dormant for many years under King Mahendra.

The year 1955 in many ways marked the high point of India's international influence and stood out as the defining year with regard

to the foreign policy and security dilemmas which India would face till the early years of the 1960s. The facets of India's influence have been mentioned earlier in this chapter; mentioning the emerging dilemmas would be pertinent. The intensities of the Cold War and the resulting military alliances were creating a new security environment around India, especially in the context of Pakistan's defence relationships with the US. India's relations with the Western powers were tense and difficult between 1947 and 1954 due to the reasons mentioned earlier. By 1955 India was turning to the socialist countries, particularly to the Soviet Union and its East European allies, to meet its defence and technological requirements after having received negative responses from the West. India's relations with China, though normal and friendly at the formal and high governmental levels, were beginning to be subjected to negative pressures born of China's claims on Tibet and certain border regions of India. Nehru's overall view about India's position in the international community in 1955 found expression in a communication which he sent to K.D. Malaviya on 25 October 1955: "Our prestige in the world today is largely because we maintain our self-respect and independence, at the same time, being friendly to all. Therefore, we must proceed with a certain restraint in all these matters. Restraint does not necessarily mean delay. Indeed, if eager steps are taken, the reaction will be delay."

The most notable acknowledgement of the pre-eminence of India in world affairs came from Winston Churchill despite his long-standing disdain for India and its potentialities. Writing to Panditji on 21 February 1955 he observed: "I hope you will think of the phrase, 'The light of Asia'. It seems to me that you might be able to do what no other human being could, in giving India, the lead at least in the realm of thought, throughout Asia with freedom and dignity of the individual as the ideal rather than the Communist Party drill book." To me this was a reluctant acknowledgement of the logic of non-alignment and the potentialities of India as a bastion of freedom and stability in international relations.

4

End of Illusions; Beginnings of Realism (1956-64)

Experiences gained during the period 1955-64 resulted in the maturing of India's foreign policy. The idealistic aspirations for creating a moral and equitable world order and the assessment that avoiding involvement with power politics would ensure a fair and just treatment of India by other nations were tempered by the realism of political and economic crises which India went through.

Foreign policy challenges that India faced, in broad terms, during this period were as follows: The unwillingness of Western democracies to give India the necessary assistance to strengthen the infrastructural sectors of the economy and defence capacities. The intensification of politico-strategic confrontationist arrangements related to the Cold War in which Pakistan, the South-East Asian countries and India's West Asian neighbours such as Iran and Turkey got involved. The strategic postures and territorial claims of Pakistan and China threatened India's unity and territorial integrity. India had to ensure successes in its endeavour to consolidate Afro-Asian unity which New Delhi considered an important factor in resisting Cold War pressures and to ensure the

independence and economic development of a large number of Asian and African countries which became free of colonial/imperial domination (this endeavour had commenced with the convening of the Asian Relations Conference in March 1947, followed by the meeting of South Asian heads of Government in Colombo in 1954, culminating in the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in 1955). More specifically, India had to cope with the ramifications of the sporadic Chinese territorial incursions into eastern, western and north-western sectors of the Indian border. Also, the Suez and Hungarian crises had their own fallout. We were also concerned with the crisis in the Congo, the implications of the emerging split between China and the Soviet Union and the Cuban missile crisis. A major crisis looming large on the horizon due to the failure of Sino-Indian border talks of 1961 was the threat of war. Eventually, in 1962, the Chinese invaded India and occupied large parts of Indian territory.

The year 1964 stands out as a watershed for India. Pandit Nehru passed away in May that year marking the end of an era, and the closure of the first chapter in the evolution of India's foreign policy. However, the final phase of Nehru's prime ministership exposed many of India's vulnerabilities culminating in India's military defeat at the hands of China in October-November 1962. This débâcle led to an intriguing conundrum in international politics: how did China manage to grab Indian territory despite Jawaharlal Nehru being at the peak of his leadership role in the global stage?

What caused the foregoing vulnerabilities? Answers to this question provide an explanation for shifts in India's policies as well as for the osmosis and failures from which they suffered. India's apprehensions regarding Pakistan increased by a quantum dimension when the latter signed a defence and military cooperation agreement with the United States in the mid-1950s. Pakistan's joining the SEATO and CENTO pacts accentuated India's threat perceptions, especially in the context of Pakistani interpretations of the implications of its becoming a member of these Western military alliances. Pakistan claimed that its bilateral defence arrangements with the USA and its membership of

CENTO and SEATO obliged the West to support it politically and militarily in its disputes with India. This was the quid pro quo which Pakistan demanded for becoming a party to the anti-communist alliances.

Here, an elaboration of China's assertive strategic and territorial stance against India would be pertinent. India had reconciled itself to China claiming suzerainty over Tibet and eroding the authority of the Dalai Lama in the hope that this stand would stabilise Sino-Indian relations in their territorial dimensions and in other respects. Jawaharlal Nehru was insistent on Tibetan autonomy while he agreed to the resumption of China's suzerainty over Tibet. His expectation mentioned above proved to be unrealistic as China had already commenced the construction of a road in Aksai Chin in 1955-56 which was part of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir. China had also commenced publishing maps of the Indian subcontinent showing parts of Ladakh and parts of north-eastern India as belonging to it. The process of estrangement between China and India had begun.

Other critical developments were: Pakistan continuing its cogitation about Kashmir both at the United Nations and in Kashmir itself on the one hand and Chinese involvement with secessionist insurgencies in the north-eastern states of India on the other.

There were also domestic challenges to the country's security and stability. While food assistance and inputs for the softer sectors of the Indian economy were coming from Western countries, they continued to resist providing investment and technological inputs in the core sectors. The most glaring example of this attitude was the UK, the US and West Germany initially refusing to cooperate with India in setting up steel plants. The UK and West Germany changed their stand only after the Russians gave a positive response to Indian requirements in this field. India's efforts at diversifying and modernising its economy to move out of its essentially agricultural groove suffered from the limitation of Western attitudes. Moreover, ethnic centrifugal tendencies were emerging in domestic politics as manifested in the demand for linguistic states. New strategic and security

compulsions were impinging on Indian politics, requiring new orientations and new responses.

Other significant happenings cast their shadow on India. With Khruschev replacing Stalin as the leader of the Eastern Bloc, old Soviet ideological and political prejudices about India disappeared. The creation of CENTO and SEATO and Pakistan and the South-East Asian countries joining this anti-Soviet system of alliances focussed Soviet strategic interests on South and South-East Asia. Mao-tse Tung's disagreements with Khruschev and the evolving distances between China and the Soviet Union provided an additional impetus to Russian interest in the South Asian region. India's involvement with the Non-aligned Movement, its support to Abdul Gamal Nasser during the Suez crisis, its silence on the Soviet intervention in Hungary, its firm resistance of Western pressure, exerted bilaterally and through the UN, to compromise on Kashmir and its support to the Palestinians and Arabs after the creation of Israel had widened the gulf of mutual suspicions and contradictions in political and security interests between India and the Western democracies. India was therefore in search of equations as well as cooperative relations with other countries which would meet its political and economic interests and its security concerns. A convergence of interests had emerged between the Soviet bloc countries and India. New Delhi seized this opportunity. Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union in the mid-1950s and Khruschev's and Bulganin's joint state visit to India in 1955 laid the foundation of the Indo-Soviet equation which served the vital interests of both countries. (This equation continued uninterrupted for a little more than 35 years, until November/ December 1991.)

The cooperation which developed among India, the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union's allies fell within a clearly defined ideological and political framework. India was not transforming itself into a communist country; the Soviet Union was agreeable to the relationship based on the concepts of peaceful coexistence and non-alignment. India's chief motivations were to strengthen its economic and defence capacities with the assistance of the

Soviet Union and to use the leverage of Indo-Soviet friendship and the Soviet Union's superpower status to counter politico-strategic challenges to India's territorial integrity and national consolidation processes. There was also the unarticulated objective of counterbalancing Pakistan's growing proximity to the USA and China. Sino-Pakistani equations grew in tandem with Sino-Indian estrangements from 1956 onwards. The point to be kept in mind is that India turned to the Soviet Union *only after* Western democracies failed to respond to its expectations and requirements.

India opted for the conventional dual track approach in dealing with internal insurgencies and secessionist movements, namely, that of measured resistance to insurgent violence, at the same time, making overtures for a political dialogue. Ethno-linguistic centrifugal tendencies were neutralised by the reorganisation of former British Indian Provinces and integrated Princely States which conformed to linguistic and subcultural identities constituting the Indian polity. While this lowered temperatures and resolved the problem in the short term, the process consolidated the subregional ethno-linguistic identities which carried in them seeds of centrifugal impulses. Such seeds, upon germination, could erode the unity of the Indian Republic. The short-term solutions resorted to were unavoidable on all counts.

India managed to tackle various problems related to its security and stability during this period except in one case, namely, the Chinese challenge to India's territorial integrity. Chinese maps incorporating Indian areas into China and Chou En-lai's exchanges with Nehru had signalled Chinese intentions of rearranging the international frontier between India and China. India rejected the basic Chinese argument that the border between the two countries as they existed in 1947/1949 were artificial and represented an arbitrary colonial and imperial phenomenon, which required alteration taking into account pre-colonial factual, national, and even socio-cultural, jurisdiction and affinities.

After granting concessions to China on Tibet, India was not prepared to make further territorial adjustments affecting the metropolitan territory of the Indian Union. Apart from the macro-

level geopolitical anxiety to protect the country's territorial integrity, an equally important consideration in taking this stance was sustaining the multiethnic and multireligious character of the Indian state. Making territorial adjustments with China which might have resulted in the alienation and separation of populations of the north-eastern provinces was not, and could not be, acceptable to India.

Sino-Indian boundary negotiations, therefore, failed, while levels of military confrontation between the two countries escalated from 1959 till 1962, ultimately resulting in the war of 1962. Hindsight leads one to the following conclusions:

(1) The military conflict occurred because the Chinese viewed India's negotiating stance as insincere and the Indians viewed the Chinese approach on the boundary issue as expansionist and an unjust attempt at changing realities on the ground, and that too, through clandestine means and gradual subterfuge.
(2) Border skirmishes escalated into a full-scale war due to mutual forward patrolling and establishment of military border posts to substantiate respective territorial claims. The overconfidence of some of India's military commanders of the time about the superiority of the Indian armed forces over the Chinese was one of the inputs which triggered off the war.
(3) The war could have been avoided if both sides had shown greater patience in dealing with the complex boundary issue, which had been further complicated by historical and cartographical ambiguities. Such patience might have characterised their respective negotiating stances had both countries possessed more experience in dealing with interstate relations.

India's military débâcle in the Sino-Indian war of 1962 had a salutary impact on Indian strategic thinking and foreign policy. It resulted in a fundamental review of India's military doctrines, threat assessments, arms production and defence supplies acquisition policies. Indian foreign policy, which was predicated on the ideological conceptions of Asian solidarity, non-use of force in

resolving disputes, impartial objectivity on the part of the international community in reacting to critical issues, moved from these illusions to the world of "realpolitik". The trauma of a military defeat had a powerful impact. The second shock was the manner in which other countries reacted to the Indian predicament, particularly a majority of non-aligned countries, and even the Soviet Union. Their stand was an education to India. All of them temporised, refused to pronounce on the merits of the boundary issue, or on the responsibility for starting the war. None of them wanted to take sides, or be seen as partial to India or China. Sri Lanka, UAR (now Egypt) and Ghana nominated a delegation of senior politicians, namely, Felix Bandaranaike, Abdul Hakem Amer and Offori Atta, respectively, to mediate between China and India. (Since this delegation was constituted at Sri Lanka's initiative, the resulting proposals were called the "Colombo proposals".) India learnt the valuable lesson that countries react to critical developments and issues not affecting them directly in terms of their own interests and not on the basis of objective realities and the merits of the situation. Ironically, it was the anti-non-aligned USA and the UK which promptly came to the rescue of India militarily, and not Khruschev's Soviet Union which was still inhibited about categorically supporting a non-aligned country against a communist country, even if the latter was abusive of the Soviet leadership. The US President John F. Kennedy's motivation in coming to the assistance of India, while animated by his sympathy for an important democratic state in the developing world, was also a strategic move to counter Chinese and Soviet influence in South Asia. India was indeed grateful for the assistance but was equally aware of the complex motivations behind such assistance. The year 1962 is, therefore, a watershed, marking a profound metamorphosis in the "terms of reference" and paradigms governing India's foreign policy and defence postures.

Such a metamorphosis influenced policies, decisions and thought processes of the establishment and also the people of India for nearly two-and-a-half decades. An analysis of these transformed attitudes and approaches should necessarily precede

the third chronological phase of Indian security and foreign relations perceptions from 1964 to 1989-90.

Jawaharlal Nehru emerged from the crisis of India's 1962 military débâcle a profoundly disillusioned man. His vision of a peaceful international order for the newly independent Asian and African countries, and the predications on which he conceived this vision, were rudely shattered. He passed away from the political stage of India within a year and a half of the Sino-Indian war. In his passing away, India also lost the normative and somewhat idealistic moorings of defence and foreign policies. The priorities animating Indian policies, in the immediate aftermath of the defeat at the hands of the Chinese, were:

(1) To review the organisation of, and more importantly, to restructure, the Army to pre-empt any such future débâcle.
(2) To upgrade the weapons systems of the armed forces and to diversify them to match the varied requirements of defence along the heterogeneous frontiers of India.
(3) To change the force deployment patterns on the basis of lessons learnt from the Sino-Indian conflict.
(4) To create the necessary transportation, supply lines and logistical infrastructure at different points on the frontiers of the country, according to specific requirements in each sector.
(5) To strengthen linkages of the Union Government with those states of the Union located on India's frontiers with neighbouring countries, namely, China, Myanmar (Burma), Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan and also to give more attention and resources for their developmental needs. The north-eastern states, West Bengal, Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala were the target states for this exercise.

During the course of the 1962 war, the fact that Chinese troops could come down to the plains of Assam, up to Tezpur, made India deeply conscious of the need not only to ensure the security of the north-eastern states in strategic and military terms but also to

make the people of these states feel that they belonged to India and that they were an integrated and vital constituent of the Indian polity. This awareness, in any case, was in the making as a response to the insurgencies of Naga and Mizo militants. An additional contributing factor to this concern was the curious and intriguing interest shown by a number of scholars from Western Europe and North America to carry out research on tribal and religious affinities of the people of Assam and other north-eastern states in order to determine how relevant and valid their linkages with the Indian Union were, in terms of normative parameters of federalism in India. The manner in which they should be structured in relation to distantly located constituent units was attempted to be examined. There was fairly reliable information available to the Government of India about some of these studies being sponsored by assorted foreign intelligence agencies and their front organisations. This dimension of ensuring India's security and unity became the focus of attention from the end of 1962 onwards.

India's military defeat at the hands of China exerted another pressure extraneous to the Sino-Indian imbroglio, affecting India's security. The Kashmir issue was revived, both by the United States and the United Kingdom. President Kennedy sent Averill Harriman to ascertain if India would reopen negotiations on Kashmir with Pakistan. Lord Louis Mountbatten and Duncan Sandys from England joined the effort: the signal was that India should agree to some sort of compromise on Kashmir as a quid pro quo to the political support and prompt military assistance that had been provided by the USA and the UK to India against China. India was inclined to give a reasonable response to these suggestions: gratitude for the assistance given and the desirability of solving an intractable problem such as Kashmir in the larger interests of peace in the subcontinent underpinned this approach. Indian Foreign Minister Sardar Swaran Singh's negotiations with Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto on Kashmir and other bilateral issues during 1962-63 were a result of the political and diplomatic pressures exerted by the USA and the UK. As anticipated by India, these discussions were inconclusive. India, therefore, faced revived

political, if not military, threat perceptions regarding Kashmir, which had to be coped with.

The policy decisions and the steps for implementing them that India took to respond to the foregoing priorities and pressures were systematic and significant. The task of analysing the military implications of the Sino-Indian war was entrusted to a senior Indian army commander, Lieutenant-General Henderson Brooks, whose report still remains classified, but his suggestions generally formed the basis for Indian military reforms. Sections of the Indian Army were converted into mountain divisions. Special units and groups were formed for anti-insurgency and commando operations. A paramilitary force, called the Border Security Force, was created to man the first line of defence in different sectors of India's frontiers and to ensure continuous monitoring of the security situation along the Indian borders. An extensive plan to construct border observation posts was initiated. The weapons systems of all branches of the armed forces began getting specialised and upgraded. The acquisition of relevant defence technologies to make India progressively self-reliant and self-sufficient in defence capacities became an operational objective of India's defence policies. V.K. Krishna Menon, India's Defence Minister, much maligned though he was, was the initiator of this process. A decision was taken to diversify sources of defence supplies. Some beginnings were made but political and financial factors resulted in the bulk of defence equipment coming from the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries. A border roads organisation was created — with personnel drawn mainly from the Military Engineering Service — to build a network of roads adjacent to India's land frontier salients with all its neighbours to ensure easy and quick access to forward areas all along the border. Such an activity included road construction in the bordering state of Bhutan. Special attention was given in this respect to Assam, and the other north-eastern states. Air bases and airstrips were constructed to meet not just existing but potential security requirements. Simultaneously, more funds and developmental inputs were organised for the border states. Administrative, political, economic

and educational measures were initiated to incorporate these states in the mainstream of national socio-political processes. This policy still continues. It was during the years 1962-66 that the Government of India shifted the emphasis from military to political means to counter insurgencies and separatist movements in the north-eastern region. The Central Government became progressively more responsive to political aspirations based on the differing sense of identities of various tribal and ethnic groups in the north-eastern parts of India.

Certain ramifications resulting from Pakistan's evolving strategic equations with the United States and the close relationship which the former forged with China after Field Marshal Ayub Khan came to power in Pakistan (1958-59) have to be noted as important factors in terms of orientations in India's foreign policy. The initial expectation of Jawaharlal Nehru that India's taking the issue of Pakistani invasion into Jammu and Kashmir to the United Nations' Security Council would result in the international body's taking steps to resolve the imbroglio on constitutional and legal grounds and on the merits of the case proved to be wrong (see Chapter 2). The involutions and sophistry which characterised the stance of the United States and the Western democracies on the Kashmir issue at the United Nations are well-known; they need no elaboration. The consequence for India was that, instead of asking Pakistan to withdraw from the Indian territory seized by it, the West ensured that Pakistan got the status of a claimant on the territory which it described as "disputed". The objectives were to somehow legitimise this status of Pakistan and either to engineer the secession of Jammu and Kashmir from India or to divide the state on the basis of religious demography. Pakistan refused to abide by the UN resolutions of 1948 and 1949 which stipulated that Pakistani troops should completely withdraw from all the territories of the pre-partition state of Jammu and Kashmir. India's willingness to hold a plebiscite was predicated on Pakistan abiding by this stipulation.

Since the Western democracies and the United Nations did not exert any pressure on Pakistan to vacate the territory occupied by it, and since they started proposing a number of mechanisms for questioning Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India as well as India's jurisdiction over Jammu and Kashmir, New Delhi learnt the required lesson in political realism and took the political stand that the only role for the UN which India would accept was for it to ensure that Pakistan gave up its intrusive presence in Jammu and Kashmir as the commitments which India made between 1947 and 1951 had become irrelevant in the context of new strategic developments and because of Pakistan's obduracy. India also conveyed its view that it did not acknowledge the United Nations' jurisdiction on determining the status of Jammu and Kashmir which was irrevocably an integral part of India. Krishna Menon articulated this firm stand of India at great length in 1957 in the Security Council meetings though one has to acknowledge that his oratory did not make any impression on the immediate audience in the Security Council, a number of whom, including three permanent members (the US, the UK and France), were military allies of Pakistan at that point of time. The pro-Pakistani attitude of the UK and France was also a result of an anti-West stance which India took on the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt in which Israel was also involved. This invasion resulted in the Suez Canal crisis after it was nationalised by Nasser.

Let us now consider in greater detail the events leading to the Sino-Indian military conflict of 1962. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Chinese maps had depicted various sections of Indian territory as belonging to China. This cartographic expansionism was backed up by real-life Chinese activities on the ground. The Chinese had started sending caravans through the Aksai Chin region of Ladakh from Sinkiang to western Tibet. Chinese patrols were intruding up to Demchok on the Kashmir-Tibet border. Between 1956 and 1959, all attempts by the Dalai Lama to come to a satisfactory arrangement for maintaining the autonomy of Tibet had failed. Events reached a critical threshold by 1959, which led to the Dalai Lama's escape from Lhasa with a number of his followers and

his being given political asylum in India. This event increased Chinese hostility towards India. Nehru's insistence that India's acknowledging Chinese suzerainty over Tibet did not mean that China could obliterate the separate political identity of Tibet and erode its autonomy — was not accepted by the Chinese leadership. The Chinese interpreted the Dalai Lama's getting political asylum in India as an indication of New Delhi's intention of encouraging secessionism in Tibet against Chinese authorities.

It was against this background that Sino-Indian boundary talks were held between 1956 and 1961. India's hesitation in confronting the Chinese directly about their territorial ambitions against India in the initial stages of the boundary dispute found expression in the first official note which we sent to China with regard to Aksai Chin. We did not question the movement of Chinese caravans across Aksai Chin or their constructing roads on what we claimed as our territory. This note only contained objections to the presence of Chinese personnel without proper visas on Indian territory. The general Indian attitude on the Sino-Indian boundary question till 1959 was to avoid a political confrontation while signalling India's objections to Chinese territorial claims on procedural grounds. This attitude can also be attributed to the general assurances conveyed by Chou En-lai during his discussions with Indian leaders and other Asian leaders that while China considered the MacMahon Line an unacceptable colonial phenomenon, it was willing to accept this line as the *de facto* frontier. This approach, perhaps, lulled India into a sense of complacency towards the prospects of a compromise with China regarding the boundary question.

During the same period, China had intensified its relations with both Nepal and Burma. Neither the Chinese on the one hand nor the Nepalese or Burmese on the other kept Nehru informed. This was interpreted by Nehru as an incipient act of strategic encirclement of India. What is curious is that in his exchanges with Chou En-lai between 1954 and 1961, he did not raise these concerns in any categorical or firm manner.

In 1959, however, Chinese intrusive patrolling activity on the Sino-Indian boundary increased. India responded by setting up

border posts and intensifying patrolling by its own security forces in order to counter this phenomenon. The result was skirmishes between Indian security forces and Chinese border guards, in which Indians suffered more casualties. The most significant among these skirmishes was the incident at Longju in 1959. The boundary talks, nevertheless, continued. The last round was held in Rangoon in 1961, resulting in a stalemate. The earlier discussions of Nehru with Chou En-lai (in 1957 and 1960) had not succeeded in finding a compromise.

It was clear by the autumn of 1959 that Sino-Indian boundary talks would fail. Nehru had written to Chou En-lai on 22 March 1959 stating the Indian position that alignments of the Sino-Indian boundary were based on natural features supported by tradition and, over much part, confirmed by various historical treaties. Chou En-lai responded to this letter on 8 September 1959 and rejected the Indian stand. He claimed that nearly 40,000 square miles of Indian territory shown by China in its maps were valid. What followed was an escalation of Chinese military activities on the Sino-Indian border, which India tried to resist. Tensions increased on an ascending curve, degenerating into a military conflict in which India was defeated.

China's unilateral ceasefire announcement and its withdrawing to strategically dominant positions south of the international frontier claimed by India came to be known as the "line of actual control". Indian and Chinese forces still face each other across this line, more than 35 years after the Sino-Indian war. An analysis of the policy statements of Chinese leaders and of policy stances adopted by leaders of other countries and of Pandit Nehru's reaction to these developments lead to the following conclusions.

India was unnecessarily cautious and lacked firmness in reacting to the Chinese stance on the border issue. We were unrealistic in assessing Chinese intentions and, at the same time, unduly optimistic about finding a political compromise. Such a state of affairs was compounded by a mistaken sense of confidence about our military capacity and preparedness as well as inadequate prioritisation of potential threats from Pakistan and China. The Chinese stance on

the Sino-Indian boundary was imbued by their "Middle Kingdom" complex. But even more importantly they viewed India as hostile because of New Delhi's insistence on Tibetan autonomy and its support to the Dalai Lama. The Chinese leadership viewed India through a distorted ideological prism. Both Chen Yi and Chou En-lai in their conversations with the Soviet leadership accused Pandit Nehru of being an agent of American imperialism and India being part of the Western Bloc bent upon threatening the security and stability of communist countries. Chinese hostility was not just focussed on the differences of opinion about the Sino-Indian boundary but it also had larger negative political and ideological dimensions, i.e., it sought to prevent India from becoming an influential Asian power. We initially failed to perceive this larger political reality and, when we did so, we did not react to it in time.

Pakistan took full advantage of India's weakened position. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto succeeded in establishing strategic equations and defence relationships with China. Sino-Pak collaboration became a threatening factor in India's regional security environment. Pakistan also unilaterally ceded large chunks of territories from Jammu and Kashmir (which was under its occupation) to China by means of a boundary agreement signed in 1962-63, an act which has no legitimacy in Indian eyes. Legally and technically, Pakistan gave away territory belonging to a third country. The territory thus ceded provided the basis for the geostrategic linkage between Pakistan and China on the northern extremities of India.

The foregoing trends and developments had a profound impact on India's foreign and defence policies during the following decades.

The shift from an idealistic and purely moral framework of reference in India's foreign policy was a result of the foregoing events and developments. Other international events and patterns of India's relations with the US and the Soviet Union contributed to this process. The 1956 Suez and Hungarian crises (referred to earlier) and civil war in Congo could be described as the triggering points which initiated this transformation.

Let us consider the preceding three events in a little more detail. India's reactions to the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of the Suez Canal zone contrasted sharply with the Indian attitude on the Russian invasion of Hungary against the Imre Nagi Government. India was critical of the coercive reaction of the Western powers against Nasser's nationalising the Suez Canal, whereas India's reaction to the Russian intervention in Hungary was ambivalent and non-critical. Such reactions on the part of New Delhi created further distances between the Western democracies and India, apart from drawing general criticism from domestic public opinion as well as from abroad. Sufficient information is on public record about what India said and did about these two critical events. The purpose here is not to recall the details but to attempt an analysis of the rationale of the Indian stance at that time and the compulsions thereof. It has to be recalled that Nehru was fully supportive of the Egyptian Revolution which overthrew the voluptuary Egyptian monarch Farouq. Solidarity with the Arabs was not just a political but also an emotional and psychological undercurrent of Indian foreign policy. India's large Muslim citizenry increased the content and intensity of this trend in Indian foreign policy. Nasser was emerging as an acknowledged leader of the Arab world. Equally important was the fact that Nasser and Nehru had established a positive personal equation with each other at the Afro-Asian Conference of 1955. The reason why Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal zone and took over the control of the canal was because the West, led by the Americans, suddenly withdrew the assistance which had been promised to Egypt for the building of the Aswan High Dam, which was a vital development project. Egypt desired to send a message of political displeasure but, even more than that, it wished to gather alternative resources for the dam by controlling the Suez Canal and being in total command of the resources which could be garnered by payments by international shipping going through the canal. This rationale behind, or the causation of, the Egyptian decision must have struck a responsive chord in Nehru and Indian public opinion despite India's having approached the Western democracies for

assistance to build the core sectors of the Indian economy and for the transfer of the relevant technology. The West was deliberately tardy in responding to India's needs. The logic of the Western industrialised countries was simple. In their shortsightedness they held the view that if India developed industrially and became technologically advanced and self-reliant, the Indian market would not generate the same opportunities for Western manufactured products; so, why not prevent India from realising its potentialities to the extent possible? The withdrawal of assistance for the Aswan Dam by the West smacked of the same approach. India's support for Nasser was therefore logical. Even otherwise, the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt revived memories of imperial gunboat diplomacy. On the other hand, it is not possible to justify India's ambivalent and generally supportive stance of the Soviet invasion of Hungary on moral or normative political grounds. There were, however, other reasons for India not wanting to offend the Soviet Union.

Indo-Soviet relations were improving in defence cooperation and gaining in economic content after the death of Stalin and the advent to power of Khruschev and Bulganin. Nehru had visited Moscow in the mid-1950s. Khruschev and Bulganin had undertaken a highly successful visit to India in 1955 during which far-reaching policy decisions were taken for Indo-Soviet cooperation in the fields of defence, heavy industry, science and technology. The Soviet Union's commitment to strengthen the Indian economy and defence capacities was a major foreign policy and geostrategic development. Most importantly, Khruschev and Bulganin categorically supported India's stand on Jammu and Kashmir during their visit to India. The Soviet Union, of course, was taking full advantage of the West's distances and reticences about India in order to develop an equation with New Delhi. The Soviet Union also correctly assessed India's expectations and frustrations, and they were responsive to our concerns. Nehru had realised by the mid-1950s that being clinically non-aligned and impartial in world affairs was not desirable. India needed friends to support its cause on certain issues in which other world powers could get interested.

The Soviet Union and other socialist countries were showing an inclination to become friendly with India. There was no point in vitiating or slowing down these growing equations with the socialist bloc by becoming critical of the Soviet Union on the Hungarian issue which in no way impinged directly on any Indian interests. It is also relevant to emphasise that the management of the Suez Canal was a matter of direct economic and strategic interest to India; i.e., if the canal was under the control of a friendly Arab country, instead of former colonial powers, India's interests would be better served. This was the logic of India's contrasting stance on these two issues.

A fair segment of world public opinion as well as Western governments criticised this contradiction in Indian foreign policy. They asserted that India's contradictory views on the Hungarian and Suez crises negated New Delhi's claims that its foreign policy was based on moral principles. This criticism was (and is) valid at the apparent and normative levels, but it was the first major manifestation of India acting firmly to safeguard its perceived national interests. It also reflected the fact that India was realising that international politics is essentially an amoral phenomenon governed by power equations and vested interests. India could not become an exception to this general predicament in international relations, if it had to safeguard its interests. Even in retrospect, there is no need for India to feel defensive about its policy stance on these two critical developments which took place more than four decades ago.

Indo-US relations acquired both complexities and economic content during President Dwight D. Eisenhower's tenure from 1953 to 1961. Personal relations between Eisenhower and Nehru were better than those between Nehru and Eisenhower's predecessor Harry Truman. This positive chemistry was, however, neutralised by Eisenhower's Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' supercilious righteousness summed up in his foreign policy doctrine: "Those who are not with us are against us." Despite US

reservations and reticences, Indo-US trade and economic relations expanded from 1954 to 1962. Significantly, Indo-US technological cooperation made substantive beginnings during this period, specially in high-technology sectors such as nuclear power. The US Ambassador Chester Bowles, who was in Delhi from 1956 to 1961, played a major role in giving substance to Indo-US relations. There was a certain convergence of views on disarmament and nuclear issues between Nehru and Eisenhower which manifested itself in the support India gave to Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace Programme". India and the United States also cooperated in bringing about the partial test ban treaty.

While Indo-US relations improved in terms of bilateral trade in the second half of the 1950s, deep differences emerged in the perceptions of the two nations with respect to certain strategic and security matters as well as some aspects of India's domestic economic policies. The socialist orientation of India's domestic economic management affirmed at the 1955 Avadi session of the Indian National Congress was looked upon as a challenge to the principles on the free market economy approach which was a critical element in the US's foreign economic policies. The United States perceived pro-communist, fellow-travelling characteristics in India's approach both in terms of domestic and foreign policies. Other factors, such as India's opposition to the military alliance systems from NATO to SEATO (which were forged during this period), India's strong opposition to the US-Pakistan defence agreements and arrangements (which commenced in 1954) and India's objection to the US treating India and Pakistan as equals on the Kashmir issue at the United Nations, did not help matters.

India's forging closer relations with the Soviet Union and China, bolstered by Nehru's visits to Moscow and Beijing and India's silence on the Soviet invasion of Hungary in contrast to India's criticism of the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of the Suez, convinced the US that the Indian claim about being a non-aligned country was only a tactical posture, whereas, in substance, India was becoming part of the socialist bloc. "Even if India is not Red, it is decidedly pink and is a fellow-traveller of the Communists",

was the view of an American professor teaching political science at Delhi University in the mid-1950s (when I was a student there).

Despite the misgivings about India on the part of Washington, it was during the Eisenhower era that the US started emerging as a major trading partner and as a provider of economic and food assistance to India. Educational and cultural exchanges between India and the US increased. US intellectuals and academic establishments started replacing the UK and Germany as the most significant external researchers and observers of Indian developments. Despite Dulles' reservations about India and his view that India was deliberately working against US interests by consolidating its relations with China and the Soviet Union, Eisenhower felt that India's democratic experiment deserved US encouragement and support. The most concrete manifestation of this view was Eisenhower's visit to India in 1959, the first-ever presidential visit from the US. This visit was a success. The last phase of the Eisenhower period was, however, marred by the US refusing to endorse the Indian stance on Kashmir, apart from US opposition to India reclaiming Goa by coercive means and the US's profound suspicions about V.K. Krishna Menon's influence on India's foreign and defence policies.

The advent of John F. Kennedy as the President of the USA (in 1961) raised expectations in India of a more positive relationship between the two countries. However, such expectations were short-lived. Washington expected India to compromise on Kashmir as a quid pro quo for assistance from the USA during the Sino-Indian war. Another event which contributed to widening of differences between New Delhi and Washington was the Cuban missile crisis. The US naturally expected India to be supportive of its stand *vis-à-vis* Cuba. But India was not. There was particular disappointment in the US about India recognising the Fidel Castro regime in Cuba soon after he came to power.

The basic paradigm within which Indo-US relations evolved was structured during this period. The constituent elements of this paradigm were:

(1) Despite both countries being democracies, India and the US had fundamental differences about their respective strategic and security interests.
(2) India's non-aligned foreign policy and its becoming a founding member of the Non-aligned Movement, which attracted support from a majority of the emerging Third World countries, was considered a trend which was detrimental to US interests and strategic plans.
(3) India's planned economy and its socialistic orientation precluded possibilities of substantive Indo-US economic and technological cooperation.
(4) Indian views on disarmament did not conform to US politico-strategic doctrines beyond a certain point.

Two further significant events related to India's foreign relations are worth mentioning. The first was military operations against the Portuguese to integrate Goa, Daman and Diu into India (in December 1961). India had undertaken negotiations with France and Portugal (from 1946-47) onwards to cede small territories in India which they had retained under their control during the British period. France was reasonable. Successful negotiations resulted in Pondicherry and Chandernagar being ceded to India and becoming an integral part of the country. Antonio de Oliveira Salazar of Portugal, however, had problems about being reasonable or practical. All efforts to come to a settlement had failed. By the end of 1956 India had reached the saturation point of its patience with Portugal. The freedom movement in Portugal-occupied territories was growing in intensity. The Portuguese Government's reaction was ruthless and harsh. This generated growing resentment in Indian public opinion, particularly in the Indian provinces bordering Goa.

US Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker made an ingenious suggestion that India could perhaps "purchase" the Portuguese territories from the Portuguese Government as the US had once bought Louisiana and Alaska. This was an unrealistic proposal because Portugal was equally unwilling to accept a commercial

solution. The pusillanimous reaction of the international community to India's predicament in Kashmir had also influenced New Delhi to take the view that when all peaceful methods failed, coercive action became inevitable. Though Nehru was reluctant to go in for military action, Portugal's obstinacy and the local Portuguese forces in Goa firing across the border and killing Indians ultimately compelled India to take military action. Both President Kennedy and Ambassador J.K. Galbraith tried to pressurise Nehru to desist from military action in Goa. Lord Mountbatten also joined this effort. But the situation on the ground was such that any continuation of the anachronistic political status of Goa as a Portuguese colony on the west coast of India would have been detrimental to Indian interests and would have offended Indian public opinion. Indian troops moved into Goa on the night of 17 December 1961 and the whole operation was over in 26 hours. In the international diplomatic circles, there was much condemnation and breast beating regarding India's "violent" methods and India having lost the high moral ground in foreign policy for a brief period. But India's experience in Kashmir, its dilemma with respect to China and Pakistan, and its assessment of the terms of reference by which international relations were conducted by the more influential powers in the world had made the leaders realise that beyond a certain point, adhering to reason and morality was taken advantage of by the rest of the world. India stood its ground and survived irrelevant and hypocritical cogitations on the part of the rest of the world about its removing the last vestiges of colonialism from its territory. That India went through 14 years of negotiations with Portugal was in itself sufficient proof that New Delhi resorted to coercive means only as the last unavoidable resort.

Another significant event was India's playing the principal role in peace-keeping in Congo, where Belgium had relinquished control in 1960, leaving the place in an administrative and economic shambles. The Belgians, however, desired to retain control over the province of Katanga, which was very rich in natural and mineral resources and therefore encouraged secession of the province from its former colony. The consequence was a civil war

leading to UN intervention. In this context, Dag Hammerskjoeld (the UN Secretary-General) requested Nehru for the services of India's Ambassador to the United Nations, Rajeshwar Dayal, to act as his representative to deal with the Congolese crisis. He also requested for an Indian military contingent to constitute a major element of a United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Congo. Consequently, Dayal and an Indian Army contingent played a vital role in sustaining the unity of Congo which later became the Republic of Zaire. The only tragedy was that India could not prevent the violent demise of President Lumumba of Congo and that of Dag Hammerskjoeld in an air crash. India, while achieving success in this peace-keeping operation, also learnt an important lesson that there could be violent dualities in foreign policy exercises. While the US was a participant in the United Nations' activities in Congo, sections of the US foreign policy and intelligence establishments were clear that Congo should not be allowed to fall under the control of a left-oriented regime led by Lumumba. As a result, Lumumba's murder was engineered by these sections of the US Government. The cause of Dag Hammerskjoeld's death still remains shrouded in mystery. The general perceptions are that he had become an inconveniently impartial and strong Secretary-General committed to the ideals and the objectives of the United Nations Charter and so he had to be removed from the scene.

India's active support to the eradication of colonialism was bearing fruit at the end of the 1950s. By early 1960, African countries south of the Sahara had started becoming free with the withdrawal of the colonial powers. Nehru had established personal relations with an entire group of African leaders who were to lead their nations in the 1960s and 1970s. For instance, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta and Tom Mboya were in touch with Panditji. Such contact resulted in laying the foundations of India's relations with African countries.

The most significant event in terms of multilateral relations of this period was the founding of the Non-aligned Movement in Belgrade in 1961. The Afro-Asian Conference had evolved an

identity beyond geographical connotations. The shared concerns, the convergence of interests on economic and political issues and the conviction that stability and well-being of the newly independent countries depended on their not getting involved in the Cold War led to the establishment of the Non-aligned Movement. Nehru, Nasser (Egypt), Tito (Yugoslavia), Soekarno (Indonesia) and Nkrumah (Ghana) were the principal figures who created the movement. It would be pertinent to note that Jawaharlal Nehru was not in favour of creating a "non-aligned movement". He felt that creating a new grouping of countries would amount to the establishment of another bloc which would get into competition or confrontation with the already existing opposing blocs in the Cold War. Nehru made a clear distinction between being non-aligned and becoming part of a non-aligned movement. He was of the view that a non-aligned stance in foreign policy would always be relevant in order to maintain the independent and sovereign discretion of developing countries in safeguarding their interests. He felt that becoming a part of a movement might prove to be an impractical proposition because the interests and priorities of different countries would not always converge even if they shared a general conviction about the validity of non-alignment. He was prophetic in his vision. The correspondence between Nehru and Krishna Menon on the subject during this period indicates that it was the latter who persuaded Nehru to participate in the creation of the movement arguing that creating a forum of like-minded countries would safeguard the collective interests of the developing countries of the world and would also further the foreign policy objectives of India. The establishment of the Non-aligned Movement added another dimension of prominence to Nehru's stature as an international statesman. Consequently, India also acquired a voice of influence in various international fora as a founding member of NAM.

Panditji had to face the disenchantment resulting from the shattering of his world vision within a year of creation of NAM due to the Sino-Indian war. His entire focus was on tackling the crisis born of this conflict and on resolving domestic problems from the autumn of 1962 onwards. He suffered a stroke at

Bhubaneshwar in 1963 and ultimately passed away on 27 May 1964.

While referring to Panditji's disenchantment and the destruction of his world vision, it would be pertinent to digress a bit to refer to the role that V.K.Krishna Menon played in the formulation and implementation of India's foreign policy during the initial period of the independence of India and also later. He was the Defence Minister in Nehru's cabinet at the time of the Sino-India war and India's military débâcle. As a consequence, collective perceptions about him in Indian public opinion have been uniformly critical and prejudiced. He was accused of being a thinly disguised communist, of giving Nehru wrong assessments about the intentions of China and the Soviet Union, of politicising the Indian Army, playing favourites in its promotion policies and having sent the Indian Army, ill-equipped and ill-prepared, into the battle with the Chinese under unqualified and inexperienced generals such as B.M.Kaul who was considered to be one of his favourites. There are elements of validity in these criticisms but to make them the focal causation of the Indian débâcle is unfair. There were other individuals in the power structure of India, who must share the blame. Our Ambassador to China, Parthasarathy did not anticipate Chinese intentions, for instance!

Menon has been validly criticised for being acerbic, confrontationist and cut-and-dry in his political attitudes and methods of interaction, particularly with his counterparts from the establishments of Western countries. This criticism was backed up by the prejudices which a number of senior civil servants had against him. They considered him a political interloper who had managed to gain the confidence of Pandit Nehru.

In overall terms, however, his role as an architect of India's foreign and defence policies, which gave the country a sense of identity, confidence and clarity about its national interests should be acknowledged and must not be forgotten.

Another interesting but oft-forgotten incident towards the end of the Sino-Indian war of 1962 pertains to the operational support which the US government under President Kennedy extended to

India. Some aspects of this assistance have been touched upon earlier in this chapter, but the event ignored is the US Government ordering its aircraft carrier, *Enterprise*, into the Bay of Bengal to send a signal to the Chinese that there could be effective American military support for India if the conflict crossed certain thresholds which could threaten India's territorial integrity. Every Indian remembers the arrival of the *Enterprise* later to bully Mrs. Gandhi during the East Pakistan crisis and the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. One should not forget that the same ship had come in the Sino-Indian conflict. The point the incident proves is that the United States has been consistent in projecting its strategic influence in different parts of the world in the context of its national interests and in the framework of its global strategic orientations. Recalling the arrival of the *Enterprise* in 1962 would perhaps enable us to view US policies with greater objectivity, and balance off our anger about the ship's arrival in the Bay of Bengal in 1971.

The period of initial fashioning and formulation of the basic terms of reference of Indian foreign policy ended in 1964, coinciding with Nehru's death. Over the years, since independence (in August 1947), India's foreign policy had moved from its idealistic and romantic phase to more realistic moorings as Panditji progressively adjusted to political realities and emerging trends in world politics as well as to the pressures born out of these trends on India. India faced a certain amount of domestic uncertainty when Nehru died because of his long tenure as Prime Minister as well as Foreign Minister and his overarching and dominant personality. India was also about to find itself in a more complex and tense international environment. The Cold War was reaching its peak; the resulting confrontations were affecting West Asia, parts of Africa and those countries which formerly constituted Indo-China. Despite the attempts at controlling the spread of nuclear weapons, the proliferation of such weapons was becoming an incremental phenomenon in the defence policies of the more influential powers of the world. Nearer home, India faced a truculent Nepal, a hostile Pakistan and an inimical China. The strategic environment around India was becoming more

critical with (1) the creation of a China-Pak political and defence nexus and (2) the increasing ideological and political antagonism between the Soviet Union and China, which benefited India to some extent but, at the same time, heightened tensions in the Asian region and also prevented the possibilities of reaching any reasonable solution to the Sino-Indian boundary dispute for some time to come. Such an environment called for appropriate changes in foreign policy. It was in an ambience of tension and ferment that Lal Bahadur Shastri became the Prime Minister of India in mid-1964.

5

The Indo-Centric Phase: 1964-77

Lal Bahadur Shastri succeeded Jawaharlal Nehru as the Prime Minister of India in 1964. Both Shastriji's persona and his world vision were markedly different from Nehru's.While he shared with Nehru the foreign policy terms of reference put in place by the freedom struggle and the view that India should contribute to structuring a harmonious world, he did not envisage some sort of predestined world leadership role for India which formed part of Nehru's vision. Nor did Shastri share the Nehruvian concept that international politics was, and would be, a moral and just phenomenon. Moreover, Shastri did not look at the world through the prisms of Anglo-Saxon ideologies or European experiences, which constituted an essential ingredient of Nehru's worldview. Entirely educated in India and steeped in the experiences of the Indian freedom struggle, Shastri was down to earth, practical and Indo-centric in his approach, both towards domestic politics and foreign policy. Diminutive, always low profile and soft-spoken, he was a leader known for his probity, high moral stature and his capacity for decisive action. This was a person who had resigned

from the Indian Council of Ministers as Railway Minister taking responsibility for a train accident which had taken place in the early 1960s. He was among the first to offer to step down as a minister when the Kamraj Plan was introduced. Compared to other senior politicians who jockeyed for the prime ministership of India upon Nehru's death, he remained uninvolved in the race for power. It was because of his personal qualities, and perhaps more because of a feeling in the senior Congress leadership that he would not be a dominating leader, which led to his being the choice for prime ministership. He had no great experience in foreign policy or defence matters nor was he well known in the chancelleries all over the world. In fact, the rulers of India's neighbouring countries as well as leaders of the great powers, not knowing much about him, underestimated his capacity for sound political judgement and his ability to act in India's interest, swiftly and decisively.

The foreign relations predicament which Shastri faced was complex, uncertain and adversarial. India was still recovering from the trauma of the humiliating military defeat by the Chinese in 1962. India had to fashion political equations with other power centres of the world and also to shore up its defence capacities to manage the antagonistic relations with China. The situation was further exacerbated by the growing nexus between China and Pakistan under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's foreign policy initiatives. Pakistan and China raised their bilateral relations to a higher level with formal arrangements for defence and strategic cooperation. Bhutto had already ceded the north and the north-western portions of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to China. Pakistan had also interpreted the obligations of the Western powers towards it (because of Pakistan's membership of the SEATO and the CENTO) to mean that these powers were bound to assist Pakistan in case of a military conflict between India and Pakistan. There was no formal questioning of this Pakistani interpretation by the US and its allies in the NATO, the CENTO or the SEATO. Pakistan had also successfully initiated the creation of political, defence and economic cooperation mechanisms on the principle of Islamic solidarity, which ultimately evolved into the Organisation of Islamic

Conference (OIC). These initiatives were directed towards Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and the countries of the Gulf. Barring Afghanistan, all these Muslim countries were already involved in economic cooperation and defence alliance arrangements with the US. The evolving macro-level strategic environment also posed a threat to Indian security concerns. China became a nuclear power in 1964, after successfully conducting nuclear weapons tests and acquiring missile capacities. Parallel to this development multilateral negotiations for the finalisation and the implementation of a nuclear non-proliferation treaty were reaching their critical stage. This treaty was discriminatory, as it was being drafted, stipulating prohibition against nuclear weapons capacity being acquired by those countries which did not possess nuclear weapons by a certain date (January 1968), while leaving the freedom of option to all nuclear weapons states not only to retain but also to improve their nuclear weapons arsenal.

Meanwhile, Moscow, while taking full advantage of the increasing economic technological and defence dependence of India on the Soviet Union, was showing inclinations towards cultivating Pakistan also. This inclination was predicated on Bhutto's populist foreign policy pronouncements which contained elements of leftist leanings. Moreover, another factor inspiring Moscow was the Soviet motivation to compete with China and the US to gain influence with Pakistan as it was located at a geostrategically important point (on the Soviet Central Asia's southern and south-western flank). These changes in Soviet foreign policy had occurred with Leonid Brezhnev and Alexei Kosygin replacing Khruschev at the top of the hierarchy.

With Bhutto's increasing influence in his country's power structure, Pakistan had become more active in asserting its claims on Jammu and Kashmir. Pandit Nehru had released Sheikh Abdullah from prison a few weeks before his (Nehru's) death. (Sheikh Abdullah was a prominent leader from J&K, who had been under house arrest, for allegedly "subversive" activities, for more than a decade.) Recently released documents of the US State Department and writings of US officials provide definite information

that Sheikh Abdullah had established contacts with the US Government, with Pakistani authorities as well as with representatives of the Saudi Arabian Government by the end of 1964. At this stage, he gave indications that he would welcome Pakistan's and US's intervention in Jammu and Kashmir to reverse that state's accession to the Indian Republic. In this context, Sheikh Abdullah had met CIA official Duane R. Claridge (who, in 1964, had been posted in India) in Paris and later in Saudi Arabia. (Claridge has given an account of these meetings in his book *Spy for All Seasons: My Life in the CIA*, published in 1997.) It is now public knowledge that the reason for Pakistan being confident about getting US support in case of a conflict situation with India was the secret assurance given to Pakistan as early as 1962. The US had informed Pakistan that its security guarantees (to Pakistan) against communist aggression given in 1959 would be extended to cover conflicts with India also. Between 1963 and the beginning of 1965 Pakistan was assisted in building up its military strength, particularly its army and air force by the US, which supplied modern American armaments and weapons including Patton tanks and strike aircraft.

There were also tentative attempts by the US at weakening Afro-Asian solidarity and the Non-aligned Movement with Washington encouraging an economically resurgent Japan to float the idea of an Asia South Pacific Cooperation (ASPAC) Forum to encourage economic interaction and political equations between Asian countries and the countries of the Far East and the Pacific region. The organisation was to be the constituent element of the policy for containing China and the Soviet Union. The idea was formally proposed just before a scheduled conference of African and Asian countries in Algeria late in 1964 or in the first half of 1965.

When he took over as Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri had to cope with the aforementioned range of critical developments in the international arena apart from managing domestic political uncertainties resulting from the departure of a dominant personality (Jawaharlal Nehru) from the political scene in India. Suffice it to

say that Shastri had commenced coping with these challenges in a gradual and practical manner. He remained steadfast in India's commitment to Non-alignment and to India's determination to become self-reliant as far as its economic development and defence preparedness were concerned. He was not responsive to the ASPAC initiative of Japan as he correctly perceived it to be a covert challenge to the Non-aligned Movement. He directed Indian negotiators involved in discussions on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty to ensure that, in its final form, it met the objectives of genuine non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. It is difficult to speculate how his foreign policy would have evolved because of his sudden tragic and untimely death at Tashkent in January 1966. His tenure was too short, but all indications were that he would have oriented India's foreign policy towards political realism and towards a greater focus on the country's national interests. Events which characterised the highlights of foreign policy during Shastri's period in office were the conflict with Pakistan in the Rann of Kutch in April 1965 and in Kashmir in September the same year. It was Shastri's courageous handling of this major crisis, that seriously affected Indian security, for which he would be remembered with admiration and respect by the Indian people for generations to come.

A detailed description and analysis of how Shastri handled the complexities of the 1965 Indo-Pak conflict constitutes a significant phase in the evolution of India's foreign policy. It would be necessary to examine the role of Sheikh Abdullah in the run-up to the conflict.

Apart from visiting Paris and Saudi Arabia, Abdullah also visited Pakistan after his release from prison in 1964. The CIA official, Claridge (mentioned earlier in this chapter), reveals in his book that when he met Sheikh Abdullah in Saudi Arabia, the latter claimed that he was fully briefed by Pakistani authorities about their next move in Kashmir. According to Abdullah, Pakistani authorities had told him that Pakistan was going to infiltrate small units of guerrillas into the Indian part of Jammu and Kashmir from the territory of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Their instructions were

to create disturbances in Jammu and Kashmir and raise them to a pitch of insurgent insurrection, at which point the plan was that the Pakistani armed forces would attack Jammu and Kashmir. As an initial exercise of testing Indian military capacities and morale, Pakistan attacked the Rann of Kutch in April 1965. Pakistan deployed US military equipment, including Patton tanks, in this military operation. India somehow managed to resist the invasion, but not decisively. This apparent shortcoming on India's part encouraged Pakistan to confidently launch its planned military adventure in Kashmir in the autumn of 1965. The Pakistani predications were: (a) The guerrillas infiltrated by Pakistan into Jammu and Kashmir would succeed in creating widespread insurgency which India would not be able to control; (b) Pakistan's regular forces then intervening in Jammu and Kashmir would be able to capture the state before the Indian forces could take effective counteraction; (c) the Pakistani move would have the support of the people of Jammu and Kashmir; (d) India's military response would be limited to the area of operations chosen by the Pakistani armed forces in Jammu and Kashmir; and (e) an interesting Pakistani strategic predication was that India on the defensive in Jammu and Kashmir may opt to attack East Pakistan which India would consider vulnerable, and if India exercised this option, Pakistan would persuade China to attack India, thereby neutralising the Indian threat to East Pakistan. It was on the basis of these predications that Field Marshal Ayub Khan and Bhutto launched a Pakistani attack on Jammu and Kashmir in September 1965 called "Operation Gibraltar". Unfortunately, for Pakistan, each and every one of the predications detailed above was proved wrong; Pakistani plans came unstuck. The foregoing Pakistani predications were based on two erroneous calculations: first, their assessment that Lal Bahadur Shastri being new, less experienced and apparently reticent about drastic action would react to the Pakistani military move as Nehru had reacted to events in Kashmir in 1947-48. Shastri surprised them by his swift reaction which was totally unexpected. Secondly, Pakistan had hoped that if it faced a critical predicament, China's military support would come

in the form of pressure on India in the North-East. Both Ayub Khan and Bhutto did not reckon with the fact that China's foreign and defence policies have always been Sino-centric; in other words, the Chinese do not believe in pulling other people's chestnuts out of the fire.

When Pakistan succeeded in capturing Akhnoor and the Chicken's Neck salient in the initial stages of the 1965 war, cutting off Indian access to Jammu and Kashmir temporarily, Shastri's reaction was decisive and strategically perceptive. Most importantly, his decision had the high virtue of all military doctrines: a total element of surprise. Shastri ordered a direct attack on West Pakistan across the international frontiers, directing Indian forces to aim for Lahore and for major military centres in western Punjab. This move was totally unexpected. Shastri's calculation that pressure on West Pakistani territory would blunt the thrust of the Pakistani attack on Jammu and Kashmir proved to be correct. Pakistan had to pull back its forces and divert them to prevent Indian penetration of Pakistani territory. Indian forces succeeded in moving into Pakistani territory all along the border, coming within striking distance of Lahore. The Indian armoured forces neutralised and destroyed the main Pakistani armoured division at the battle of Assal Uttar, otherwise known as the Battle of Khemkaran.

By not taking any action against East Pakistan, Shastri avoided any provocation for a possible Chinese intervention in the conflict. This was a politically astute decision on his part, which effectively neutralised any Pakistani expectations of Chinese support. Shastri thus managed to shift the focus of the conflict away from Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan's metropolitan territories. Both the USA and the Soviet Union became anxious to ensure a ceasefire through negotiations. Washington's attempts did not evoke any positive response from New Delhi because American weapons had been used against India. These were the same weapons which the US had provided as part of defence assistance to Pakistan. Such weapons had been used despite earlier assurances by President Dwight Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles to Pandit Nehru that they had been given to Pakistan on a clear understanding that they

would not be used in a conflict with India. Eisenhower and Dulles had also assured Nehru that if Pakistan violated this commitment, the US would take appropriate preventive action.

Another factor which prejudiced India against US mediatory efforts during the 1965 war was that Washington did not inform New Delhi about possible Pakistani intentions despite being aware of them. Pakistan's deployment of American Patton tanks in the Rann of Kucth and other military equipment of US origin was brought to the notice of the US Defence Supply Mission in India headed by Major-General Johnson. There was also a general intelligence assessment that the US was kept informed of Pakistani intentions of a short and quick operation in Jammu and Kashmir to which the US Defence and higher political establishments were not averse. The United States did not send any political signal to Pakistan throughout 1965 to cease and desist from military adventurism against India. Further proof that the United States was generally aware of Pakistani intentions before the 1965 war broke out has been revealed by defence specialist, K. Subrahmanyam, in his article in the *Times of India* (11 August 1997). Here, he refers to a book, *The Crisis Game*, by the American scholar Sydney F. Griffin (Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. 6523768). The book mentions a war game exercise entitled "Kashmir 1966: As a Fictional Crisis". This study was carried out in February 1965, two months before Pakistan's intrusion into the Rann of Kutch and seven months before the Pakistani invasion of Jammu and Kashmir in September that year. The study categorically asserted that the Pakistani attack on Kashmir would commence on 1 September 1966; only the year was wrong, the date was accurate. According to this war game exercise prepared by the Institute of Defence Analysis, Washington, which is a Pentagon think tank, Pakistani forces would overrun most of Indian Jammu and Kashmir and reach Srinagar. The Soviet Ambassador was expected to advise Lal Bahadur Shastri to counterattack in East Pakistan. But a vacillating and weak Shastri did not do so. In the process, China was likely to attack Sikkim, at which point India would request the US for

assistance which would be given on the precondition that India would hold a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir. All this remained wishful thinking; nothing of this sort happened. What happened was that Pakistan had to face a decisive military débâcle.

Consequently, urgent and informal discussions between the Soviet Union and the United States led to Washington endorsing a Soviet mediatory effort, with the US guaranteeing that it would persuade Pakistan to be responsive to such an effort. Lal Bahadur Shastri responded positively to Kosygin's messages which led to the Indo-Pakistan meeting under Soviet mediation in Tashkent in the then Soviet Uzbekistan. Kosygin personally presided over this tripartite meeting. Negotiations were complex and tense. While Pakistan was anxious for a ceasefire and was willing to pull back from Jammu and Kashmir, Ayub Khan was keen that Pakistani positions in Jammu and Kashmir captured by the Indian armed forces should revert to Pakistani control as part of the peace package. The Pakistani leader was also anxious about India withdrawing from Pakistani territories which the Indian army had captured in west Punjab and in Sindh. Lal Bahadur Shastri was willing to withdraw from Pakistani territory proper. But he was reluctant to vacate all the positions captured by the Indian forces in Jammu and Kashmir. He was also insistent on Pakistani guarantees relating to abjuring intervention, encouraging subversion and using force to deal with the Kashmir issue.

After much hard bargaining, Shastri agreed to an important compromise in addition to the aforementioned basic stipulations. He agreed to the pulling back of Indian armed forces from the strategic Haji Pir Pass due to what he considered overriding considerations of restoring peace and normalcy between India and Pakistan. Unfortunately, he passed away within hours of signing the Tashkent Agreement due to a sudden heart attack.

The Indian defence establishment was not happy about withdrawing from the Haji Pir Pass. This establishment also had reservations about the ceasefire line. With the passage of years, the viewpoints of the Indian defence establishment and certain segments of Indian public opinion have proved to be valid. Shastri,

under pressure from a friendly country like the Soviet Union, and taking into account the larger considerations of peace and stability, perhaps agreed to a compromise beyond what was necessary. While being endowed with a capacity for decisiveness when India's vital interests were involved, he was essentially a man of peace, committed to normalcy and stability and the well-being of the people of the subcontinent. This is the only plausible explanation for the accommodation which he showed to Field Marshal Ayub Khan at Tashkent. The Pakistani leader was clearly a frustrated and disappointed participant in the Tashkent Agreement. He came under fierce domestic criticism, led by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who described the Tashkent Agreement as "a national humiliation and a diplomatic betrayal". In fact, in the middle of the 1965 war, when Pakistan was on the defensive, Bhutto sent a top secret memorandum to Ayub Khan advocating the dismemberment of India. The well-known writer, Stanley Wolpert in his book *Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan — His Life and Times* (p. 93) has reproduced an extract from this memorandum:

> The defence of East Pakistan would need to be closely coordinated with Chinese actions both in NEFA and also possibly in the regions of Nepal and Sikkim. It would be necessary to provide the Chinese with a link-up with our forces (Pakistani forces) in that sector. I envisage a lightning thrust across the narrow stretch of Indian territory that separates Pakistan from Nepal [the reference is to the Jalpaiguri, Siliguri, Bagdodgra, and Cooch Behar salients of Indian territory]. From our point of view this would be highly desirable. It would be to the advantage of Nepal to secure its freedom from isolation by India. It would solve the problem of Sikkim and Tibet, and for us (Pakistan) [provide] a stranglehold over Assam, the disposition of which we can then determine.

While the Tashkent Agreement ended the conflict and revived a tenuous atmosphere of peace between India and Pakistan, it clearly did not provide a basis for durable normalcy or stable

relations between the two countries. Taking all factors into account Lal Bahadur Shastri's achievements at Tashkent were as follows: (1) bringing an end to the war; (2) creating an international image of reasonableness for India; and (3) projecting India as a credible military power capable of safeguarding its national interests and sustaining Indo-Soviet relations, which were very necessary to protect India's economic and defence interests, in the Cold War atmosphere.

Such were the challenges with respect to foreign policy which Mrs. Indira Gandhi inherited from Shastri when she became the Prime Minister of India in 1966.

Mrs. Gandhi directed India's foreign affairs for 15 years in all: from 1966 to 1977 and then again from 1980 to 1984. Unlike Jawaharlal Nehru, she did not directly hold charge of the external affairs portfolio. In fact, she appointed a number of senior and influential political figures as Foreign Ministers of India, such as M.C. Chagla, Y.B. Chavan, Sardar Swaran Singh and Dinesh Singh. Yet, she emerged as a dominant influence on India's foreign relations and strategic stances during her two tenures as Prime Minister. Each one of these gentlemen was professionally and politically experienced and eminent in his own right. While being subjected to Mrs. Gandhi's instincts and orientations, these strong personalities contributed to the fashioning of India's foreign policy with a greater focus on Indian interests based on political realism, rather than idealistic perceptions.

It would be relevant to analyse Mrs. Gandhi's persona and mindset in order to understand her perceptions about India's interests and her ideas *vis-à-vis* foreign relations. Such an analysis would be a speculative exercise with the benefit of hindsight. The group of jaded old Congressmen who selected Mrs. Gandhi to succeed Lal Bahadur Shastri did so on two predications: First, that, having had very little political experience in the exercise of governmental power, Mrs. Gandhi would be a manoeuvrable (and manageable) puppet in their hands. One of these gentlemen went to the extent of describing her as a *goongi gudiya* (a dumb doll). The second predication was, compared to all of them put together

(i.e., the members of Syndicate of senior Congressmen), she had the necessary charisma and vote-getting capacities. Mrs. Gandhi proved them completely wrong in their first predication and more than justified their second one over the years. Here we are not involved with discussing the totality of her multidimensional political role during her years in office. The point of attention and analysis is the manner in which India's foreign relations were conducted by her. Her attitude to foreign relations was governed by her personal experiences and perceptions as the daughter and the official hostess of her father and the former Prime Minister of India, Pandit Nehru, though she had no direct executive responsibilities in conducting India's foreign policy then. However, she had been a companion of Pandit Nehru during his many foreign trips and during his interaction with foreign heads of state and government and with foreign leaders visiting Delhi since 1947-48. She was also part of the prime ministerial delegations which visited London, Paris, Moscow, Beijing and various other cities. She had also acquired first-hand experience with respect to the political factors which affected multilateral diplomacy and other multilateral functions even on subjects which were not essentially political. Her tenure as the Indian representative on the Executive Board of the UNESCO in the early 1960s added to her international experience. (She had succeeded Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in that position.) Though not an operational participant in the management of the crises and tensions related to the Cold War, the Korean War, the Indo-China conflict or the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, she had absorbed relevant political lessons by being a ringside witness to the processes of the formulation of India's foreign policy on these critical issues.

While sharing the Nehruvian vision of India shunning the Cold War and remaining committed to Non-alignment and while inheriting the Nehruvian aspiration of India playing a pivotal role in strengthening the forces of peace, stability and development, she did not share her father's idealistic view of the essential goodness of human nature or nation-states. Nor did she share Nehru's conviction that international relations could be managed on a purely

moral and rational basis. She believed that India's foreign policy should be clearly and precisely related to the country's evolving political, economic and security interests at given points of time. She also felt that safeguarding these interests primarily depended on India becoming self-reliant and strong. Her world vision was perceptive about the motivations and objectives of the important powers of the world. She was also imbued with a healthy sense of scepticism about the difference between pretensions and pronouncements on the one hand and underlying political realities on the other. She was conscious of the undercurrents of general antagonism towards India on the part of the United States and its allies. She was acutely aware of the threats posed to India by Pakistan and China, and was, therefore, convinced about the importance of continuing the strategic partnership with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries. Her attitude towards India's neighbours, barring Pakistan, contained a desire to structure a stable relationship based on political trust and expanding economic, cultural and technological cooperation. While her general foreign policy perceptions were clear, she also discerned that the objectives of India's foreign relations had to be *specifically* defined during times of crisis.

Though the Congress party won the 1967 general elections, it was with a narrow majority. Indira Gandhi had to cope with a very fractious ruling party which she was leading. This contradiction culminated in the break-up of the Congress in 1969. She had to resort to certain domestic political and economic measures in the second half of the 1960s which made the rest of the world question India's capacity to manage its affairs effectively and to remain stable. On the one hand, she devalued the rupee and took certain steps to assuage the concerns of the international economic power brokers. She had to counterbalance these steps by gestures like nationalising many banks and abolishing privy purses. She had to define India's foreign policy and strategic stances when the Cold War was at its peak and when Sino-Soviet differences and Sino-Pak collaboration were affecting India's security environment. She had to deal with the threat posed by

China which had become a confirmed nuclear weapons power, endowed with missile capacity. She had to replenish India's defence capacities which had been depleted during the 1965 war. She had to fashion her response to increasing international pressure on India to desist from improving its nuclear and technological capacities for defence purposes. These were India's important foreign policy concerns during the period 1966-71.

From 1966 to 1970, Mrs. Gandhi ensured stability in South Asia by upgrading India's defence capacity to prevent any further military adventurism by Pakistan and China and by establishing a cooperative and responsive relationship with Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Burma, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Being perceptive about Iran's strategic and political importance for India's security, she made special efforts to establish a closer linkage with Tehran. It should be pointed out that the formal and somewhat ambiguous relationships with countries such as Iran and Afghanistan had resulted in the former providing sanctuary to Pakistani military aircraft during the 1965 war. Although Afghanistan had remained noncommittal, it showed some emotional support for Pakistan during the conflict. Mrs. Gandhi's overtures to these countries were to remedy this situation. Despite King Mahendra's suspicions about India, she managed to expand Indo-Nepalese economic relations. Mrs. Gandhi established a particularly good equation with the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. The result was that a number of agreements were signed between Colombo and New Delhi. Moreover, India relinquished its control over the Kachchativu island to Sri Lanka. India also agreed to receive a fair proportion of Tamils of Indian origin who would be considered Indian citizens. (The Sri Lankan Government had declared them stateless.) This latter agreement was conditional to Colombo granting Sri Lankan citizenship to the balance of the Tamils of Indian origin whom it had unjustifiably declared stateless.

In the 1950s and 1960s, a large number of African countries had gained independence from colonial rule. Realising the political importance and the economic potentialities of these countries, Mrs. Gandhi paid particular attention to establishing equations with the

new African leaders. She developed a personal friendship with Kwahe Nkrumah, Kenneth Kaunda, Julius Nyerere and Sekeu Toure. She also acquired a place of prominence for India in the Non-aligned Movement on the strength of her acquaintances with Josef Broz Tito, Abdul Gamal Nasser and Fidel Castro.

Being a person with strong views and being assertive about India's interests and its national security, Mrs. Gandhi was not inclined to take any positive initiatives in improving relations with Pakistan and China in the context of the hostilities of 1962 and 1965. Realising, however, that tempering the negative orientations of Pakistan and China towards India required New Delhi to establish a working relationship with the United States and to sustain close relations with the Soviet Union, she took steps to get acquainted with Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Leonid Brezhnev. Establishing a minimally positive equation with the US was not an easy task. The fact that arms of US origin had been deployed against India in the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965 followed by the renewed pressure to compromise on Kashmir by the United States and the United Kingdom (under Prime Minister Harold Wilson) still bothered India. The differences of opinion between the US and India on the proposed nuclear non-proliferation treaty were becoming an increasing irritant. India's opposition to the US intervention in Vietnam compounded the negative factors affecting Indo-US relations. The last factor is particularly important because it formed the most important constituent element of the USA's Asia policies during the second half of the 1960s. India, with its longstanding friendship with Ho Chi Minh and its abiding commitment to resist colonialism and external intervention in the Asian region, was categorically critical of US policies in Vietnam. Other measures such as the nationalisation of banks (seen as undue state interference) and the more intense socialistic inclinations of Mrs. Gandhi's domestic economic policies did not please the Americans. While President Johnson was generally interested in developing relations with India, his foreign policy staff led by Walt Rostow and Philip Talbot, backed up by the US military establishment, were clearly pro-Pakistan in their approach. The

view that Pakistan was a valuable ally for implementing US policy and for strategic containment of the Soviet Union still prevailed in the US establishment. B.K. Nehru, who was India's Ambassador to the USA from 1963 to 1969, was of the view that Philip Talbot, the Assistant Secretary in charge of the Asian region, was the official with the highest pro-Pakistan inclinations that he had come across in the US power structure.

Despite the various setbacks, Mrs. Gandhi, nevertheless, undertook a goodwill visit to Washington in 1967. The personal chemistry between her and President Johnson tempered differences between India and the US till Johnson's departure from the presidency. This personal chemistry, however, did not change the basic juxtaposition between India and the US with respect to bilateral relations or global issues.

In contrast, relations with the Soviet Union expanded and qualitatively improved. Indo-Soviet defence and technological cooperation came into full flow during the period 1966-70. One reason for such a development could be attributed to the Soviet Union's inability to get a foothold of influence in Pakistan, which it had expected for brokering the Tashkent Agreement. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had launched a virulent campaign against Field Marshal Ayub Khan and against the Tashkent Agreement. Being an advocate of developing relations between China and Pakistan to counter India, Bhutto was vehemently opposed to any intensification of relations with the Soviet Union. Consequently, Moscow reverted to the view that a political and strategic relationship with India was more relevant to safeguarding Soviet interests. Mutuality of interests and reciprocity of needs brought India and the Soviet Union closer. Moreover, high-level visits exchanged between Mrs. Gandhi and Kosygin and between Indian and Soviet Foreign Ministers also contributed to the process.

It was in dealing with countries of South-East Asia and with the Islamic countries that Mrs. Gandhi's foreign policy became flawed when viewed in retrospect. Indonesia under the Suharto regime had turned pro-West despite remaining a member of the Non-aligned Movement. The anti-communism element of

Indonesia's domestic policy was reflected in its foreign policy. The other South-East Asian countries were an integral part of the US-led military alliances and defence cooperation arrangements. They were all supportive of the USA's Vietnam policies. But it was between 1965 and 1967 that the initiative to create ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) was taken. This regional grouping, as originally envisaged by the South-East Asian countries, wanted India also to be a full member of ASEAN.

Overtures made by the South-East Asian nations in 1967 were, however, rebuffed by New Delhi because India had structured its South-East Asia policy on the basis of its overall view of the Cold War, the situation in Vietnam and its suspicions and apprehensions about the US involvement in South-East Asia. Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh conveyed the general response that India could not get involved with a group which was a part of the American scheme of things. It took a gap of more than 23 years for India to revive contacts with the ASEAN and become "a partial dialogue partner" in 1991-92.

In the 1960s, cultivating friendship with the Islamic countries of the world was important for India due to the following reasons:

(1) To counter Pakistani hostility.
(2) To be responsive to the religious, emotional and psychological feelings of the large Muslim citizenry of India.
(3) India's economic interests (as well as trade routes) were dependent on friendship with the Arab countries which included India's dependence on the energy resources of the West Asian and Gulf regions.

India's stance on the Middle East issue and on the Arab-Israel conflicts, which supported the Palestinians and the Arabs, was shaped by the last factor mentioned, apart from India's conviction that the expulsion of the Palestinians from their original homeland by Western powers was a denial of their legitimate aspirations and rights. India did not question the creation of the state of Israel within its original territorial limits once it had been established by

the UN resolutions. India did recognise Israel but refused to establish diplomatic relations with that country because of injustices done to the Palestinian people. The distance was compounded by forcible Israeli occupation of Arab territories during the Israeli-Arab wars fought between 1956 and 1973.

Neither Jawaharlal Nehru nor Mrs. Gandhi took serious notice of the lack of unity among the Arabs in dealing with the Palestinian issue. Nor did they take note of the close political, economic and defence relationships which most Islamic countries continued to have with the US while paying lip service to the Palestinian cause. The only Arab countries which actually went to war with Israel were Syria and Egypt, whereas the majority of them limited themselves to financing the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) and to generally providing resources for defence purposes to those countries directly involved in the war. India was also less than categorical in its criticism, due to the larger political considerations, of terrorism perpetuated by the PLO and other Arab groups against civilians. Such a stance was unjustifiable both in terms of morality and international law.

Given the duality in the policies of the Arab countries themselves towards the USA and Israel, one feels that India could have been more detached and even-handed on this issue without diluting its commitment to the Palestinian cause.

In the late 1960s, Mrs. Gandhi, apart from cultivating Iran and Afghanistan, also ensured the expansion of India's economic relations with the countries of the Gulf and the Meghrab. Desirous of asserting India's status as a country having the second-largest Muslim population in the world, Mrs. Gandhi decided that India should become a member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) which was in the process of being created. India had received an invitation to join the inaugural summit of the OIC at Rabat in Morocco in 1969. We, however, missed the opportunity to create an Indian presence in the OIC because of our convoluted logic about asserting our secular identity. Instead of sending a senior Indian Muslim political figure to represent India at this conference, we committed a major *faux pas* by asking our

Ambassador in Morocco, Gurbachan Singh (a Sikh), to do so. Pakistan took full advantage of this ineptitude to ensure the exclusion of India from this conference. India's hurried attempt to mend the situation by later sending a Muslim leader, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, to lead the delegation came too late in the day and was not accepted, as far as I recall.

Pakistan interpreted India's nomination of a non-Muslim to represent it at the conference as a deliberate act which questioned the Islamic identity of the OIC. (India is still trying to regain this lost opportunity.)

Taking note of China's increasing nuclear weapons capacity and the increasing deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in the Indian Ocean region by the United States, Mrs. Gandhi authorised India's Department of Atomic Energy and the Department of Space to commence research for making India self-reliant in the spheres of nuclear weapons and missile capacity. It is relevant to note that when China exploded its first nuclear weapon device in 1964, the Americans had suggested to Dr. Homi Bhabha, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, that India should become a nuclear weapons power to counter China and that the US would be supportive of such a move. Bhabha reportedly put up this proposal to Pandit Nehru. Panditji, however, turned down this suggestion due to his firm opposition to nuclear weapons as well as all weapons of mass destruction. Dr. Bhabha eventually died in an air crash in January 1966. Three other senior atomic scientists, namely, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, Dr. Homi Sethna and Dr. Raja Ramanna, were entrusted with the task of creating India's nuclear and space potentialities by Mrs. Gandhi. India had also taken a decision not to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty because of its discriminatory provisions which allowed the existing nuclear weapon states, that is, those countries which possessed nuclear weapons by January 1968, to retain their nuclear weapons while others were prohibited from possessing such weapons or acquiring any technology capable of producing them. There was a difference of opinion among officials of the Indian Foreign

Office about signing this treaty. The Foreign Secretary, Rajeshwar Dayal, and the Joint Secretary in charge of UN Affairs, R. Jaipal, were inclined to sign and ratify the treaty, whereas the Indian representative to the NPT negotiations, V.C. Trivedi and the Director of the UN Division, S.K. Singh (who later became Foreign Secretary) were opposed to signing this discriminatory treaty. As far as I know, Mrs. Gandhi overruled the Foreign Secretary and decided to boycott the treaty when it was finalised in 1968. At that point of time, India was in the company of important countries such as France, Brazil, Argentina, Israel and China, which also refused to sign the NPT.

India's decision not to sign the NPT was backed by national consensus. Mrs. Gandhi's stand on the issue was acknowledged as an impressive step in securing India's defence options. Two critical consequences of this decision were that (1) Washington informed the Government of India that the US would stop supplying nuclear fuel for the Tarapore atomic power plant (near Bombay) when the existing contract expired (though the US was still obliged to provide nuclear fuel under a contract which had some more years to go) and (2) the Canadian Government withdrew assistance for the Rajasthan atomic power project in late 1969 and early 1970. The pretext used by the Canadians for pulling back from their contractual obligations with respect to this project was that they had received reports about India having diverted some plutonium from the Rajasthan atomic power project to Kalpakam atomic power project (in Tamil Nadu). Kalpakam was an entirely indigenous nuclear power plant and was not subject to the safeguards stipulated for the other nuclear power plants which India had set up with the collaboration of the Americans and the Canadians. India, nevertheless, managed to withstand these pressures. The French Government came to the rescue of India, taking on the obligations of the US to supply nuclear fuel to keep the Tarapore nuclear power plant running. India informed Ottawa that it could do without Canadian assistance if that country assumed a discriminatory interventionist position regarding the nuclear development programmes of India.

By 1969, India had commenced the process of expanding and consolidating its defence capacities including the upgrading of the army, the navy and the air force in terms of technology and weapons systems. The most significant adviser of Mrs. Gandhi for nurturing these policy responses from 1967 to 1973 was P.N. Haksar, a former barrister and a member of the Indian Foreign Service, who spent the last six and a half years of his career as Mrs. Gandhi's Principal Secretary. He proved to be one of the most insightful and far-sighted civil servants who assisted Mrs. Gandhi in dealing with the complex world which she faced. It was during the mid-1960s (and up to 1970) that India bolstered a number of multilateral organisations which aimed at safeguarding the collective interests of the developing countries. India was a dominant influence during the 1967 and 1970 summits of the Non-aligned countries. India became a founding member of the UNCTAD and the Group of 77. India initiated the idea of a collective effort by the international community for mobilising resources and for the formulation of programmes and projects for the development of countries of the world, which came to be described as the programme for the "second UN development decade". India was an active participant in the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Seas and in a number of other international conferences dealing with vital subjects such as space exploration and codification of international law.

In the autumn of 1970, Mrs. Gandhi led the Indian delegation to the 25th Anniversary Session of the United Nations General Assembly, thereby affirming India's commitment to the UN and its objectives at the highest political level. The Indian Prime Minister continued Nehru's policy of being supportive of the United Nations peace-keeping operations in different parts of the world. After Congo, India was involved in peace-keeping operations in Gaza, Cyprus and Lebanon.

Let us turn our attention to the events leading up to the next Indo-Pak war (1971).

India was in the process of recovering from the traumas of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, the death of Prime Minister Shastri

and the consequent domestic ferments and tensions, when Pakistan reappeared as a bugbear for India. In 1969, Bhutto's agitations succeeded in ousting Field Marshal Ayub Khan from power through a military coup led by General Yahya Khan, Pakistan's Army Chief of Staff.

Political agitation in East Pakistan against West Pakistani exploitation had reached levels wherein, in desperation, the Pakistanis started blaming India for instigating separatism in East Pakistan. The demand for the establishment of a democratic government had gained momentum in West Pakistan, under the leadership of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Consequently, Yahya Khan was compelled to announce general elections in Pakistan in the autumn of 1970. The repercussions of these elections, their results, and the reaction of Bhutto (to these results) led inexorably to the fragmentation of Pakistan, a process in which India got unavoidably involved. Tackling the ramifications of the fallout of Pakistani politics and responding to the liberation movement of the Bangladeshis were the most important foreign policy and strategic exercises undertaken by India between 1970 and 1974. The manner in which India managed these critical developments merits detailed description along with an assessment of the implications of Indian policy decisions taken at that time.

Indo-Pakistan relations plummeted to a state of intense tension by the end of 1970. The military dictatorship of General Yahya Khan did not ever come to grips with Pakistani politics sufficiently to control political developments. The reasons were twofold. First, the disillusionment of the Pakistani people with the long spell of military rule, which commenced with General Ayub Khan taking over power in 1958, continued under Yahya Khan. The authoritarianism and corruption permeating Pakistani politics under these military regimes caused this disillusionment which was compounded by the failure of the military adventure in Kashmir. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto remained in the opposition, constituting the second factor pressuring the Yahya regime. Bhutto took full advantage of the public disillusionment with Pakistan's military rulers. He created the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) which

spearheaded the opposition to the military regime demanding the restoration of democracy and the installation of elected governments in Pakistan. Parallel to Bhutto's campaign against the Yahya regime, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman launched a campaign not just for democracy but also for more autonomy for East Pakistan. India's general support to these movements for restoration of democracy evoked a negative response from Pakistan, which continued to accuse Mujibur Rehman of being an agent of the Government of India whom India had nurtured to fragment Pakistan. The Agartala conspiracy case, in which Rehman had been accused of conspiring with Indian agents for the secession of East Pakistan, though pursued with great assiduity, could not prove him guilty.

Ultimately, Yahya Khan agreed to hold general elections in Pakistan in the later half of 1970. India welcomed this step. This gesture did not go down well with Pakistan's military authorities. Nature also had a part to play. The cyclones which lashed East Pakistan in 1970 created more Indo-Pakistan tensions instead of Indo-Pakistan cooperation on the basis of humanitarian concerns. One particularly massive cyclone hit Chittagong and its surrounding areas in November 1970. India was among the first countries to offer air-borne relief and assistance to East Pakistan. The Yahya regime churlishly refused to accept this offer. One of the political consequences of the unprecedented flood situation in East Pakistan during that year's rainy season was that Yahya Khan announced the postponement of general elections, which were originally scheduled for 5 October 1970, to 7 December.

Elections were eventually held in December 1970, with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's party, the Awami League, winning a landslide victory not only in the Provincial Assembly of East Pakistan but also in the National Assembly of Pakistan. The Awami League bagged 167 out of 313 seats in the National Assembly. Mujibur Rehman and his senior colleagues in the Awami League had clearly indicated in the election campaign preceding the December elections that if the Awami League came to power, it would redraft Pakistan's Constitution. The main objective would be to provide

decentralisation and devolution of powers, thereby ensuring autonomy for East Pakistan and for the other constituent provincial units of Pakistan. In terms of the existing Constitution of Pakistan, Mujib's party would have constituted governments both in East Pakistan and at the Centre, with Mujib becoming the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Neither Bhutto nor the Punjabi officers' cadre dominating the Pakistan army was willing to accept the people's verdict in favour of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. Bhutto argued that even though Mujib had gained the majority, the election results clearly showed that while Mujib and his party were the chosen representatives of the Bengalis of East Pakistan, the same was not the case in West Pakistan where the number of seats won by the Awami League and its allies was less than those won by the Pakistan People's Party. Bhutto announced that he would not participate in the newly constituted National Assembly, and that he would not allow Mujibur Rehman to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan and that he would launch a violent agitation if the National Assembly was constituted and convened. Bhutto desired the abdication of power by Mujib and the Awami League despite their electoral victories. His viewpoint was that while his party should constitute the Provincial Government in West Pakistan, Mujib could form the Government in East Pakistan. Bhutto also warned that the Central Government of Pakistan should be created on the basis of some sort of a coalition under the umbrella of the military in the interim period, during which constitutional procedures should be negotiated with respect to ensuring a balanced representation in the Central Government from both East and West Pakistan. In other words, Bhutto did not want genuine democracy. He was not ready to accept that the majority of Pakistanis were from East Pakistan, nor was he willing to give assurances about fulfilling the political aspirations of East Pakistanis. Protracted and involuted negotiations were held in Dhaka from January 1971 to March 1971 among General Yahya Khan, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. During the course of these negotiations, the legitimate demands of the East Pakistani leader that the election verdict be respected and that the new National Assembly be

allowed to discuss and finalise the future political arrangements for structuring the Pakistani state were rejected. Mujib's assurances that he would give the Pakistan People's Party a fair share of power and that he would work for a consensus constitutional arrangement with the PPP were also rejected out of hand by Bhutto, while General Yahya Khan acquiesced in Bhutto's skulduggery.

Mrs. Gandhi and the Government of India followed the foregoing developments in detail, but with detachment, generally supporting the revival of democracy in Pakistan. Pakistan again got involved in mischief in the middle of its more important preoccupations relating to the election results. An Indian Airlines aircraft was hijacked to Lahore and destroyed by Pakistani agents and Kashmiri militants late in January 1971. India consequently suspended overflights of all Pakistani aircraft, civil and military, over Indian territory from 3 February. Tensions between India and Pakistan escalated as a result of these developments, parallel to West Pakistan's resentment against India's general support to the electoral victory of Mujibur Rehman.

Meanwhile, negotiations among Mujibur Rehman, Yayha Khan and Bhutto failed. In a public speech delivered at the Ramana Maidan (public park) on 21 March 1971, Mujibur Rehman acknowledged the failure of these talks and announced that he was launching a struggle for liberation from West Pakistani domination. He declared that the goals would be freedom and self-rule. He was arrested in the midnight of 21-22 March. Yahya Khan commenced his military crackdown on East Pakistanis that very night. Mujib was flown to West Pakistan while most of his senior colleagues escaped and succeeded in constituting the provisional Government of Bangladesh on 28 March 1971. The first major consequence of the military crackdown and the extensive violence accompanying it was that a large number of refugees, both Hindus and Muslims, fled from East Pakistan and moved into the Indian states of Assam, Manipur, Tripura and West Bengal. While India did not formally recognise the Bangladesh Government, it was generally supportive of this government. It first allowed the

government to be located on the Indian border, and then at Calcutta. While Mrs. Gandhi was inclined to give general political support to the cause of Bangladeshis, in the initial stages between March and May 1971, there was no intention to intervene militarily. In fact, some of her senior colleagues like Sardar Swaran Singh, who initially opposed intervention in Pakistani affairs, were of the view that India should generate international pressure through bilateral diplomacy and through multilateral fora which would ensure the return of the refugees to East Pakistan. They also wanted to make the Pakistan Government respect the results of the general elections and allow Mujibur Rehman to develop new constitutional processes which would fulfil the aspirations of the people of Pakistan. The Pakistani leadership, however, did not help matters. The Yahya regime as well as Bhutto compounded their lack of judgement in dealing with their internal crises by immediately launching a massive diplomatic and propaganda campaign against India, whose salient features were as follows:

(1) India fraudulently engineered Mujib's electoral victory to break up Pakistan.
(2) East Pakistani youth who took to arms against the military crackdown and army brutality were "criminals and miscreants" financed and supported by India.
(3) The freedom fighters of Bangladesh were a minority group of secessionists.
(4) The International community should ensure the unity and territorial integrity of Pakistan and ask India to cease and desist from breaking up Pakistan.
(5) Refugees from East Pakistan, who started moving into India from the end of March onwards, were described as "disaffected separatists" and later as "Indian agents" who were escaping from East Pakistan.

When the numbers of refugees rose dramatically to about nine million by November 1971, in a span of just about eight months, Pakistan resorted to ingenious but unconvincing advocacies.

Pakistan first stated that India was encouraging the flow of refugees for financial gains and offered to open relief camps to receive the refugees, if they returned. It then argued that most of the refugees were Hindus, who, in any case, were not at ease in Pakistan. When this claim was disproved and it was acknowledged by objective observers that the majority of the refugees were, in fact, Muslims, the Government of Pakistan tried to convert its self-created political crisis in East Pakistan into an international refugee problem, arguing that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees should persuade India to send back all refugees. Pakistan also declared that there was no crisis of confidence or desire for separation in East Pakistan and that once the refugees returned and Mujib agreed to a compromise, the problem could be solved; the only hurdle, according to Pakistan, was intrigue and intrusion on India's part.

Motivations for extending Indian support to the aspirations of the Bangladeshis were many. Whatever the formal government stance, ground realities should not be obfuscated. With the creation of Pakistan, although India did not want any reversal of history or the reintegration of Pakistani territories with India, New Delhi, nevertheless, remained firm in its view that religion alone did not make a nation. The two wings of Pakistan, with an intervening stretch of a thousand miles of the Indian Republic, was a geographical and political incongruity. India was also getting a little tired of having to confront and possibly fight Pakistan on two fronts whenever a conflict situation arose, specially so when the eastern front would strategically attract a joint China-Pakistan response. So, if the people of East Pakistan, because of socio-ethnic and linguistic considerations and in the face of obstinate negation of their aspirations, wished secession from Pakistan and wanted total independence, India had no objection. If Indian endorsement and support resulted in this new entity being friendly to India, it was all to the good. A non-hostile Bangladesh instead of a hostile East Pakistan was considered more desirable. Given the encouragement being offered off and on to centrifugal elements in India's north-eastern states from East Pakistani bases, it was natural for New

Delhi to support the liberation movement which, in addition, had a powerful humanistic rationale in the context of Pakistan's denial of democratic rights to Bengalis in the face of their military crackdown. The cultural and emotional sympathy of the people of West Bengal for the East Pakistanis buttressed these considerations.

The Pakistani military (dominated by the western wing) oppression of its own citizens in East Pakistan continued unabated from 21 March 1971 onwards. By July, nearly six million refugees poured into India. By September 1971, the number of refugees shot up to nearly nine and a half million. The Yahya regime, meanwhile, put Sheikh Mujibur Rehman on trial for high treason and condemned him to death, though the sentence was not carried out. Bengali defectors from the Pakistani army and the youth wing of the Awami League of East Pakistan commenced an armed struggle against the Pakistani forces, constituting themselves into a guerrilla liberation army. By July-August 1971, it was clear that the military regime of Pakistan was not willing to negotiate with Mujib or evolve a compromise which would stem the secessionist movement in East Pakistan. Public opinion in India was emphatically supportive of the armed struggle of the East Pakistanis. Mrs. Gandhi, therefore, decided to give support to the liberation struggle and to provide the necessary facilities to the Bangladesh Government in exile which was presided over by President Nazrul Islam and Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed. India was criticised at that time not only by Pakistan but also by a number of other countries for giving sanctuary to the Bangladesh Government in exile and for providing help to the liberation struggle aspiring to revive democracy in East Pakistan. It needs to be emphasised that India had not done anything unprecedented or contradictory to international law. Earlier, the UK had provided sanctuary to a number of governments in exile set up in various European countries which were resisting dictatorial Nazi expansion during the Second World War. More recently, the US had allowed governments in exile to function on its territory. These governments represented South American and Caribbean countries such as

Haiti. India was therefore unfazed by the motivated criticism which it faced on this account on the international front.

The Government of India decided on a two-track approach to resolve the East Pakistan crisis. First, to support the liberation struggle, New Delhi sought to exert pressure on the Pakistan Government to respect the electoral verdict of the December 1971 Pakistani general elections. Secondly, to mobilise international public opinion through bilateral contacts and through the United Nations to be supportive of the aspirations of the people of East Pakistan on political as well as on humanitarian grounds. While India successfully followed the first track, the second track was beset with several hurdles, particularly because of the US support to the Pakistani regime. The Richard Nixon Administration completely overlooked reports and assessments sent to Washington by the US Consulates-General in Dhaka and Calcutta, particularly by the former (Archer K. Blood). These reports had portrayed the situation objectively and urged the US Government to pressurise Yahya Khan to come to terms with Mujibur Rehman and to support the creation of democracy in Pakistan, insisting that the military crackdown and violation of human rights should stop. President Nixon and Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, however, had vested interests in not letting down General Yahya Khan. The US had initiated steps to normalise relations with the People's Republic of China, and the Government of Pakistan was playing the role of an intermediary in establishing backdoor contacts between Washington and Beijing. The period between March and July 1971 witnessed the final stages of the negotiations for the secret visit of Kissinger to Beijing in July 1971. The US could not possibly jeopardise this macro-level strategic exercise of self-interest for the cause of democracy in East Pakistan.

Kissinger himself visited India and met Mrs. Gandhi on 7 July 1971. His basic message was that India should not support the liberation struggle of the East Pakistanis and should allow Yahya Khan to resolve the problem, while the USA was willing to ensure the return of East Pakistan refugees to their country. Mrs. Gandhi found this attitude morally unjustifiable and politically unacceptable.

In any case, Kissinger's main objective was to successfully undertake the secret visit to Beijing. After leaving India, he went over to Pakistan. He flew out of Rawalpindi to Beijing in a Pakistani aeroplane on 9 July. The political and logistical support provided by Yahya Khan ensured Nixon's pro-Pakistani tilt during the East Pakistan crisis. From May 1971 onwards, India undertook a massive diplomatic effort to garner support for the aspirations of the people of East Pakistan. Senior political figures such as Jayaprakash Narayan, Foreign Minister Swaran Singh and K.C. Pant (a Union Minister) accompanied by senior officials of the Indian Foreign Office travelled to different parts of the world to lucidly explain the nature of the East Pakistan crisis and to convey the rationale of the evolving Indian policy towards this crisis.

As the human tragedy in the subcontinent assumed massive proportions, India and the Soviet Union formalised their strategic equation by signing the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation on 7 August 1971. Andrei Gromyko visited New Delhi to sign this treaty. It was one of the best kept secrets in Indo-Soviet relations. Articles 8 and 11 of this treaty provided for defence cooperation and mutual defence assistance in case of either party being subjected to threats to their territorial integrity and security. The US was, naturally, not pleased with this development. It only gave added impetus to the US desiring equations with China and Pakistan to contain the enhanced influence of the USSR in South Asia. The fallout of such orientations of US foreign policies on the East Pakistan crisis was that Nixon assured full support to Yahya Khan. Nixon also authorised the State Department and the US intelligence agencies to subvert the freedom struggle of the East Pakistanis. The US attempt almost succeeded. Officials of the US Consulate-General in Calcutta managed to establish contacts with the Foreign Minister of the Bangladesh Government in exile, Khondkar Mushtaq Ahmed, and the Foreign Secretary Mehboob-ul Aalam Chashi. The US persuaded these two gentlemen to utilise the opportunity of their visit to the United Nations General Assembly session in September 1971 in New York to declare that the Bangladesh

Government in exile was willing to enter into direct negotiations with General Yahya Khan.

Khondkar was to make such an announcement without authorisation from the President of his government Nazrul Islam and Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed. The *quid pro quo* was that Khondkar would be assisted to form a new political party with himself as President which the US would support. Khondkar was to enter into negotiations with Yahya Khan thereafter, which would result in Mujib's release and a constitutional compromise, ensuring the unity of Pakistan. The other leaders of the government in exile discovered this plan in advance with assistance from Indian intelligence agencies. The result was Khondkar and Chashi being summarily dismissed from the government, thereby preventing their going to the United Nations.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Gandhi herself undertook trips to the USSR, France, Germany and the USA to persuade these powers to ask the Yahya regime to be reasonable. She did not get any positive response from the Western powers. Nixon was truculent and supercilious. The personal diplomatic effort by Mrs. Gandhi had the additional objective of cautioning the foreign powers in advance that, if necessary, India would not hesitate to take military actions against Pakistan if the political and demographic pressure of the East Pakistan crisis threatened India's internal stability and security.

India's international diplomatic moves did not succeed. While there was all-round sympathy for the people of East Pakistan on humanitarian grounds, the world at large did not show any comprehension of the underlying political causes of the alienation of East Pakistanis from the state structure of Pakistan. A resolution on the East Pakistan crisis brought before the UN General Assembly resulted in an overwhelming majority of member-states voting against the liberation struggle and against India in September-October 1971. The general expectation of the Western powers was that this voting would chastise India and make it pull back from giving support to the liberation struggle of the Bengalis. What happened was exactly the opposite. The uncooperative stance of the West only strengthened Mrs. Gandhi's determination to support

the freedom struggle. Matters came to a head on 3 December 1971, when Yahya Khan ordered what he thought was a pre-emptive strike on Indian air force bases in Indian Punjab and in Jammu and Kashmir. The liberation struggle of the East Pakistan freedom fighters metamorphosed into a full-scale war between India and Pakistan.

The war lasted for 13 days during which the Pakistani armed forces were decisively defeated. India captured 93,000 Pakistani military personnel as prisoners of war. India was also in occupation of segments of West Pakistani territory in Punjab and Sindh. The United States tried its very best to prevent the defeat of the Pakistani forces. The US sponsored resolutions in the UN Security Council, which would have been mandatory if passed, to stop the Indian military operations. These resolutions were vetoed by the Soviet Union. The Western powers and the Chinese were fully supportive of Pakistan during the course of the war. US and Pakistani expectations that the Chinese would militarily intervene against India were not fulfilled. The United States adopted threatening military postures. Nixon ordered the US 7th Fleet into the Bay of Bengal led by the aircraft carrier *USS Enterprise*. This exercise was a massive show of force by Washington under the spurious excuse that the US fleet was proceeding towards Chittagong to evacuate American and West European citizens from East Pakistan. Though this move generated some tension and apprehension in India, Mrs. Gandhi resolutely stood her ground. She was able to do so because the Soviet Union took political and military counter-measures against this US military posturing. The war ended with the surrender of Dhaka on 16 December 1971 and the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by India in the western sector. India had given formal recognition to Bangladesh as an independent country on 5 December 1971. The Yahya military regime in Pakistan fell from office in December 1971 and Bhutto became President and the Chief Martial Law Administrator of Pakistan on the basis of the results of the December 1970 elections.

Two lessons learnt by India from the East Pakistan crisis were: first, that the United Nations had failed to act for a second time

on an issue of particular interest to India on the basis of objective criteria or merits of the case. (The United Nations' action in Kashmir was the first instance, the UN action in relation to Bangladesh was the second instance.) The second lesson was that the international community reacted to critical developments strictly within the framework of their own perceived interests and not on any moral or objective grounds.

Pakistan's political débâcle and military defeat in 1971 had destroyed the myths and deterministic predications on which Pakistan's India policy had been fashioned. For instance: (1) India did not have the political cohesiveness and grit to fight a decisive war against Pakistan; (2) India was a soft state permeated by the Hindu ethos and, therefore, it could not match Pakistan's martial traditions and military spirit; (3) India's democracy was tentative and vulnerable and therefore it was not expected to counter Pakistan's policies and moves aimed at Pakistan becoming the most influential power in the subcontinent; (4) the East Pakistanis would give up their demand of autonomy and liberation under sustained Pakistani military pressure; (5) Indian support to the Bangladeshi freedom movement could be contained by a combination of Pakistan's military strength, US support and Chinese military intervention in the crisis; and (6) the permanent members of the Security Council would act in time to prevent Pakistani military operations from becoming a military débâcle.

Finally, Bangladesh's separation destroyed the two-nation theory on the basis of which Pakistan was created: the theory that religion constitutes the basis for national identity.

Even now a lot of curiosity exists as to why India declared a unilateral ceasefire in the western sector. Why did not India continue the military operations to recapture the whole of Jammu and Kashmir and to destroy the military power structure of Pakistan completely? The main reasons for Mrs. Gandhi's decisions to end the hostilities were: (a) India continuing military operations in West Pakistan would have only aroused sentiments of national unity and purposive resistance among the people there; (b) there was no purpose in India continuing military operations in the west which

would have involved managing a hostile population; and (c) India's military successes were dependent on logistical support and defence supplies from the Soviet Union. The USSR had indicated to India that they would not be able to resist a UN-sponsored compromise if the war was prolonged without any decisive results. Soviet Deputy Foreign Ministers Firyubin and Kuznetsov visited New Delhi during the second week of December 1971 with messages from Brezhnev and Gromyko that once Bangladesh became free, India should end the war. The unarticulated implication was that Soviet military support to India could not be sustained at the levels required if the war was prolonged. The Soviet stance was also based on their calculation that they did not want a confrontation with the US beyond a threshold, as this would jeopardise the initiatives being taken by Moscow and Washington to normalise relations with each other from 1971 onwards. Thus, one may infer that Mrs. Gandhi's declaration of unilateral ceasefire was a practical and unavoidable necessity.

After the creation of Bangladesh, Mujibur Rehman was released by Bhutto on 7 January 1972. He travelled via Turkey and London, passing through New Delhi on 9 January and reaching Dhaka the same afternoon. Bhutto's anxieties were to get the Pakistani prisoners of war released and to have India vacate 5000 square miles of Pakistani territory in the west which had been captured by Indian military forces. India was willing to initiate talks with Pakistan to restore normalcy in the subcontinent. In this context, preliminary negotiations were undertaken by India with both Pakistan and Bangladesh. Mujib had to be persuaded to release Pakistani prisoners of war and Bhutto had to be persuaded to overcome the bitterness of Pakistan's military defeat and to agree to terms of reference for the normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan which would ensure durable peace between the two countries. Three eminent persons, D. P. Dhar, Policy Planning Adviser to Mrs. Gandhi, P.N. Haksar, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, and T.N. Kaul, the Foreign Secretary of India, were responsible for preparatory discussions held at Dhaka, Islamabad, Murree

and New Delhi which led to the Indo-Pakistan summit at Shimla in July 1972.

Mrs. Gandhi had visited Dhaka in March 1972 and signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman which provided the framework for future relations between India and Bangladesh. Despite Mujib's request that the Indian armed forces remain in Bangladesh for six to eight months more in order to ensure his country's security against Pakistani subversion, Mrs. Gandhi insisted on a complete withdrawal from Bangladesh by 17 March 1972, which was eventually carried out. The Bhutto-Indira Gandhi meeting in July 1972 resulted in the signing of the Shimla Agreement under which India released all the Pakistani prisoners of war and vacated Pakistani territories which the Indian army had occupied during the war. Mrs. Gandhi was keen to resolve the Kashmir issue also. It was suggested to Bhutto that the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir be redrawn and readjusted in the context of the military operations of December 1971. It was also suggested that the ceasefire line should be initially called the "line of control" and then the Jammu and Kashmir problem should be resolved by Pakistan retaining control over the areas west of this line and India retaining jurisdiction over the areas east of this line. Bhutto told Mrs. Gandhi that this suggestion was acceptable to him but he did not want this particular arrangement to be part of the formal agreement as he would be accused in Pakistan of abject surrender. He also maintained that he would not be able to survive politically and there could be a revival of some sort of a military regime and a backlash against India. He assured Mrs. Gandhi that once the line of control was drawn up and stabilised, he would, over a period of three to five years, make all efforts to convert it into an international border between India and Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi's senior Indian advisers felt that a failure of the Shimla summit or imposition of an agreement on a defeated Pakistan would be counterproductive and would only prolong Indo-Pakistan tensions. There are reports that the example of the disastrous results of the Treaty of Versailles, which was imposed on a defeated Germany in 1918, was

highlighted to Mrs. Gandhi. So, the relevant clause embodying the suggested solutions to the Jammu and Kashmir problem did not form part of the Shimla Agreement. It remained a verbal understanding between Mrs. Gandhi and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, an agreement from which Bhutto backed out as soon as he stabilised his position in Pakistan.

The Shimla Agreement stipulated mutual commitments to normalise relations between India and Pakistan and to abjure the use of force for resolving bilateral disputes. It also sought to ensure non-intervention in each other's internal affairs and respect for each other's territorial integrity. However, Bhutto succeeded in persuading Mrs. Gandhi to accept a clause in the agreement which acknowledged Jammu and Kashmir as "an issue at dispute" which had to be resolved bilaterally, or by other mutually agreed means. Looking back, one has to admit that Bhutto achieved a diplomatic success despite being the weaker party at the Shimla negotiations. He managed to fulfil three crucial objectives from Pakistan's viewpoint: (1) He got the Pakistani prisoners of war released; (2) he ensured the vacation of Pakistani territory by Indian armed forces; and (3) he kept the Kashmir issue alive as a bilateral dispute. While releasing the prisoners of war and vacating the conquered territory were practical measures necessary for ensuring subcontinental peace, it was a failure of India's foreign policy to have allowed Jammu and Kashmir to be acknowledged as an issue at dispute. India should have insisted on Pakistan giving up its claims on Jammu and Kashmir or at least fully acknowledging Indian jurisdiction over those portions of Jammu and Kashmir which India controlled as an integral part of itself.

In retrospect, India lost a valuable opportunity for resolving the Jammu and Kashmir problem which even now remains a threat to India's territorial integrity and a disturbing factor in Indo-Pakistan relations. We did not take advantage of our military victory in 1971. It would also be relevant to mention that there was a difference of opinion amongst Mrs. Gandhi's senior advisers on this issue. I know it for a fact that D.P. Dhar wanted the release of POWs and vacation of Pakistani territory to be conditional to Pakistan

accepting Indian jurisdiction over Jammu and Kashmir. He told me that P.N. Haksar cogently argued against this approach by pointing out that maintaining the prisoners of war would be a very costly proposition for India, and that not vacating Pakistani territory would only prolong tensions with that country and would also affect India's international image. In the event, the approach marked by large-heartedness and reasonableness won over arguments of calculated realpolitik. But the non-resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir issue and Pakistan's utilising it to destabilise India led to an abiding question whether we should have been as conciliatory and reasonable as we were at Shimla in 1972? Perhaps we should not have been.

The Indian confrontation with Pakistan on the issue of the liberation struggle of Bangladesh, while serving the contemporaneous strategic objectives of India and being supportive of the aspirations of the people of Bangladesh, did not achieve one vital objective, namely, the expectation that newly created Bangladesh would have a deep and profound friendship with India. The reasons were as follows:

(1) Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was subconsciously resentful of the fact that he was not an active participant in the final phase of the freedom struggle of Bangladesh. He was also envious of Bangladeshi leaders who led the struggle in 1971 after his arrest.
(2) Mujib remained, ideologically, a pre-partition Muslim Leaguer. He wanted the Muslims of East Pakistan to be the dominant segment of undivided Pakistani society, and if this was not possible, he wanted East Pakistan to become an independent entity, but with a decidedly Muslim identity.
(3) He was not greatly involved with the building up of democratic institutions of governance. He interpreted democracy in terms of a mass movement and his personal leadership based on his charisma and public appeal.
(4) He remained apprehensive of possible Indian domination of Bangladeshi politics.

These subconscious orientations affected Mujib's policies towards India and had led to the creation of some differences between India and Bangladesh from the middle of 1973 onwards. Bangladesh's negotiating stance on river water sharing, below the Farakka Barrage, at that time, entailed a number of disputes related to border enclaves and the delimitation of the maritime boundary. Bangladesh's position also reflected Mujib's marginalising the Bangladeshi leaders of the freedom struggle in Bangladesh politics, his making Bangladesh a member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the anxiety which he showed in re-establishing diplomatic relations with Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi dealt with his complexes and the undercurrent of controversies generated by his India policy with tact and patience.

Ultimately, Mujibur Rehman was instrumental in bringing about his own assassination. He abolished the Awami League, the political party which he had led for nearly three decades, and replaced it by another party called BAKSAL (Bangladesh Krishak Sangrami League). He abolished the parliamentary form of government and nominated himself as the President of Bangladesh. He lost his popular base and also his information network in the process. The pro-Pakistani elements in the Bangladesh army took advantage of this situation and assassinated him (on 15 August 1975) along with practically all members of his family and senior cabinet colleagues. Mujibur Rehman's removal from the political scene led to a continuous military dictatorship for about 16 years in Bangladesh. This situation diminished the positive chemistry of Indo-Bangladesh relations further during this period.

These developments were a disappointment to India, but the world had to be dealt with as it was. Moreover, Mrs. Gandhi had other domestic and external preoccupations to contend with.

Mrs. Gandhi was enmeshed in domestic political problems by the end of 1974. With a growing agitation against her launched by Jayaprakash Narayan's Nava-Nirman movement, the high point of foreign policy successes and the resulting popularity which she had reached at the end of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 and the subsequent agreements between Pakistan and Bangladesh, was

receding. She was embroiled in political cross-currents which ultimately led to her having to declare a state of emergency in India in June 1975.

It is worth mentioning two significant foreign policy events in 1974. The first was the restoration of some normalcy between India and the United States after the prevalent tensions between the two countries in 1971-72. Nixon had departed from the political stage due to the Watergate crisis. Indo-US agreements to strengthen bilateral relations and to establish a joint commission for multidimensional cooperation were signed in 1974. In public pronouncements the United States acknowledged India as a dominant power in the South Asian region. The second event was President Brezhnev's visit to India in 1974 during which he tried to extract a *quid pro quo* from India for the assistance which the Soviet Union had given India during the East Pakistan crisis. He suggested an Asian security plan under the Soviet Union's umbrella in which he wished India to become an active participant. Mrs. Gandhi did not accept this suggestion, standing firm on India's position that it would not participate in any defence alliance systems or security arrangements of a collective nature under the umbrella of any great power as it would involve India in the Cold War. In this stance, Mrs. Gandhi was animated by her commitment to Non-alignment and her determination to retain the freedom of options for India's foreign and defence policies. This development resulted in a certain cooling of Indo-Soviet relations for a brief period.

Another reason for Mrs. Gandhi's declining the Soviet offer for a collective Asian security arrangement was her orientation towards gradually normalising relations with China too. Any close security involvement with the Soviet Union would have delayed this process in the context of Sino-Soviet tensions existing at that point of time.

The period from 1975 to 1977 was one of defensive self-exploration in the sphere of India's foreign policy. When Mrs. Gandhi declared a state of emergency, Indian credibility as a democracy suffered a grave setback whatever justification there might have been for her decision.

A highly significant defence and foreign policy achievement during Mrs. Gandhi's first tenure as Prime Minister was India acquiring nuclear weapons capacities. India had known about Bhutto's having initiated a nuclear weapons acquisition programme for Pakistan in 1972. Mrs. Gandhi, therefore, authorised the acceleration of India's nuclear weapons capacity research. Consequently, India conducted its first underground nuclear explosion at Pokhran in the Rajasthan desert on 18 May 1974. India managed to do so in successful secrecy. There was widespread international criticism of India in the aftermath of this successful nuclear experiment. There was much international pressure on India to slow down its nuclear and technological advancement. Such criticism and pressure had a retarding impact on the Government of India. While certain technological experiments and research were continued, India did not follow through with further tests to consolidate its nuclear weapons capacity and its status as a nuclear weapons power. This was a mistake. In the decades that have followed India has had to be on the defensive in disarmament and arms control matters. We have had to negotiate from an avoidable position of weakness on these vital issues also.

The entire period from June 1975 to March 1977, when Mrs. Gandhi lost power after the general elections, saw the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and Indian diplomatic missions generally engaged in justifying the emergency and rationalising the resulting decisions.

After the purposiveness and successes which characterised India's foreign policy, till 1974, the end of Mrs. Gandhi's first tenure as Prime Minister in March 1977 was an anti-climax.

6

A Period of Domestic Uncertainty and Reactive Diplomacy: 1977-84

The state of emergency imposed on India by Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the resentment of Indian public opinion against this decision overshadowed India's foreign policy during the last two years (1975-77) of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's first tenure as Prime Minister. The credibility of the Indian democratic experiment nosedived. Foreign observers went into a Cassandra mode, confidently predicting that India would descend into a dictatorship based on a nexus between the Congress Party and the defence forces with the army gaining the upper hand as was the case in Pakistan. There was further pessimistic prognosis that the very fact of India being so large and amorphous a civil society would ensure that the dictatorship would disintegrate into anarchy and result in the fragmentation of the country.

The series of economic and technological sanctions activated against India in retaliation for its underground nuclear test at Pokhran in 1974 had a negative impact on the country's economy and technological development. India's nuclear experiment, its opposition to the NPT, combined with the criticism about the

imposition of emergency, resulted in a foreign policy predicament where India became vulnerable and isolated. The tentative attempts at economic liberalisation and inviting foreign investment into India, initiated by Sanjay Gandhi, with the approval of his mother (Mrs. Gandhi), did not really attract the expected response. Mrs. Gandhi's calling for general elections in March 1977 came as an unexpected and pleasant surprise not only to the people of India but also to the international community. Mrs. Gandhi's and the Congress Party's comprehensive defeat in the elections and the coming to power of the Janata Party under the leadership of Morarji Desai restored international faith in India's commitment to democracy and, more important, in the ability of the Indian people to sustain it. More specifically, there were anticipations that the new government would bring about basic changes in India's foreign policy. There was the expectation that the ideological terms of reference of India's foreign policy, mainly Non-alignment, socialistic orientations about international cooperation on economic matters, anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism as well as objections to discriminatory nuclear non-proliferation, would undergo radical transformation. This anticipation or expectation originated due to two factors. It was the first time since India's independence in August 1947 that an Indian Government was being headed by a non-Congress Prime Minister not related to Jawaharlal Nehru or Indira Gandhi. More importantly, Morarji Desai was not a loyalist of the Nehru-Gandhi family. First, it was known that he had both ideological and operational differences with Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi about India's domestic economic policies and India's foreign policy. He was considered a right-of-the-centre, conservative politician with inclinations to be friendly with Western democracies, who had reservations about India's overinvolvement with the socialist bloc. The second factor was an erosion of the solidarity and integrity amongst developing countries in their representative fora such as the Non-aligned Movement, G-77 and UNCTAD. With the Non-aligned Movement accepting countries involved in Cold War military alliance systems as full members, with some of these countries having bilateral defence and political alliances with the

US and the Soviet Union, the character and orientations of the movement were undergoing a marked change. Simultaneously, strategic and power equations between important members of the international community were undergoing transformation. The US Government's initiative to normalise relations with the Soviet Union and China were succeeding. China had consolidated its position as a nuclear weapon's power and as a superpower in the international community. It had become a member of the United Nations and taken a permanent seat in the Security Council. At that point of time, there was greater consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation issues compared to the late 1960s and the first half of the 1970s.

Taking note of new Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai's pacifist ideological affiliations as well as his basic policy differences on a number of issues with Mrs. Gandhi, there was hope among the important global powers (the USA, the USSR, and the European democracies) that India could be persuaded to fall in line with non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control plans which they had in mind. There was also a feeling that, under Morarji Desai, India would abandon its socialist, public sector-dominated economic policies and move towards becoming a market economy, willing to accept Western influences and guidelines. The neighbours of India such as China, Pakistan and to a lesser extent Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, despite the existing problems and disputes, felt that Desai would be more conciliatory in dealing with these issues as he would not be subject to Indira Gandhi's influences on India's foreign policies and defence postures.

A little more specificity in describing the attitudes of India's neighbours towards New Delhi at the time of Desai's advent to power would be relevant. Morarji Desai was not associated with the Indian mindset in any of the wars fought between India and Pakistan from 1948 onwards. His criticism of India assuming direct control over Sikkim (in 1975) and his general opposition to the break-up of Pakistan were generally known. His refraining from making any comments of Zia-ul Haq's assumption of power after overthrowing Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was perceived as a principled and detached stand.

Desai's stand was in sharp contrast to Mrs. Gandhi's questioning of military rule in Pakistan and her general view that the elected representative of the people of Pakistan, namely, Bhutto, had more legitimacy in Pakistani politics than Zia-ul Haq who was a military figure and who had taken over power through a "coup". Pakistan felt it could make a fresh start to normalise relations with India, taking advantage of the presumed idealism and rigid Gandhian principles governing Morarji Desai's attitude on foreign policy issues. It was ironic that Pakistani public opinion and the media which had tolerated and which had continued to tolerate military rule in Pakistan for years gave good conduct certificates to the Indian Republic for restoring democracy by defeating Mrs. Gandhi and punishing her for the declaration of emergency.

As far as China was concerned, both Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi were intractably linked at the political and emotional levels with factors such as the controversies related to the Sino-Indian boundary dispute, the failure of the Sino-Indian negotiations and the military conflict of 1962. Morarji Desai and his Foreign Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, not being direct participants in any of the interactions between China and India, were perceived as leaders who would take a more detached and rational view about the Sino-Indian boundary question and Sino-Indian relations. Desai's criticism of India assuming direct control of Sikkim was a positive stand from the Chinese point of view. Though Mrs. Gandhi had restored diplomatic relations with China at the ambassadorial level in July 1976, nearly eight months before Desai came to power, Sino-Indian relations were still reticent and stilted, not because of any overt or covert attitudes or actions on the part of India but because China was going through the turmoils of internal stabilisation after the death of Mao Tse-tung on 9 September 1976. This was certainly not an easy process keeping in mind all the controversies related to Mao's wife and the Gang of Four which afflicted China till Deng Xiaoping emerged as the most influential leader after Chou En-lai.

Over the years the rulers of Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka had developed complexes and resentment against Mrs. Gandhi, not because India had done anything to harm these countries under

her leadership, but because they could not readily accept her commitment and determination to safeguard Indian interests, even if it resulted in regional unpopularity for her. If Nehru's overarching idealism was perceived as unjustified pontification on his part by these countries in the last years of his life, Mrs. Gandhi was perceived as a personification of India's uncompromising will to assert its dominant regional position and to protect its vital interests, even if it was inconvenient to its neighbours. Leaders of these countries welcomed Morarji Desai's advent to power, expecting that his principled Gandhian approach to politics would make India less assertive and more compromising.

Morarji Desai's principal adviser on foreign and domestic policies was V. Shanker, who was recalled from retirement and appointed Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. His second adviser was Jagat Mehta, a former officer of the British Indian Navy who joined the Foreign Service as a war service recruit, and was one of the first entrants to the newly founded Indian Foreign Service. (Mehta had become the Foreign Secretary in 1976 under Mrs. Gandhi's dispensation.) He continued to occupy this post during Desai's tenure. Desai chose Atal Behari Vajpayee as his Foreign Minister. Vajpayee was a person with long political and parliamentary experience, and a leader endowed with a clear sense of India's interests and a practical vision for India's future. The Morarji Desai Government lasted for 19 months. Despite its short tenure, it took important foreign policy initiatives, though these initiatives were somewhat marred by tendencies towards tautological pronouncements on the part of some Janata leaders and some senior civil servants. It was announced that the foreign policy of the Janata Government would now be a policy of "genuine non-alignment". Statements were made that India would be aiming at strengthening relations with its neighbours, adhering to the principles of non-interference, respect for their sovereignty, etc. To the layman and the ordinary observer, the question occurred by implication whether India's adherence to the policy of non-alignment was not genuine enough before Morarji Desai came to power? Was the implication also that Indian foreign policy was

imbued with motivations of interference in other countries' affairs and not respecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity?

The Desai Government also indicated that India would take a fresh look on issues such as non-proliferation, disarmament, sharing of water resources with neighbouring countries and facilitating extended trade and transit arrangements with its immediate neighbours. Important landmarks in the conduct of India's foreign policy from March 1977 to October 1979 included exchange of visits between Morarji Desai and the US President Jimmy Carter in 1977-78; Vajpayee's visit to Washington in the early summer of 1979; and a determined effort to improve relations with Pakistan and China during this period. Vajpayee visited Pakistan in February 1978 and Desai and Zia-ul Haq took time off to hold bilateral meetings in Nairobi, Kenya, where both of them had gone to attend the funeral of President Jomo Kenyatta, at the end of August 1978.

Vajpayee's visit to China was significant. He flew over in February 1979, the first visit of an Indian Foreign Minister to Beijing after a gap of nearly 26 years. Also, both President Sanjeeva Reddy and Prime Minister Morarji Desai paid official visits to Sri Lanka, making contacts with Junius Jayawardene's UNP Government which had come to power after being in long exile during Sirimavo Bandaranaike's led SLFP ruling that country. This mechanistic chronology is being given only to indicate the activist posturing undertaken by the Desai Government on foreign policy issues. What would be pertinent is to assess the impact of this activism on India's foreign relations.

The high point of Indo-US relations was President Jimmy Carter's visit to India in January 1978. Compared to the realpolitik and difficult interaction between India and the United States during the presidencies of Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, indications were that Indo-US relations would improve with the reappearance of a "Democrat" President in the White House after a gap of nine years. These expectations were based on Carter's National Security Adviser, Professor Zbigniew Brezezinski's recommendation to the President that India should be given a higher priority than what was given to it by Nixon and Ford.

Carter's overall approach towards the South Asian region on the advice of Brezezinski was to fashion relations outside the framework of the Cold War and East-West controversies to the maximum extent possible. Carter indicated that the United States would be supportive of democracy, that more emphasis would be laid on North-South issues for strengthening relations with developing countries and that particular attention would be paid to countries which would impact on international politics at the end of the twentieth century. Brezezinski had specifically listed India as one of the regional influences which should be cultivated. There was also a personal factor. President Carter's mother (Lillian Carter) had served in India as a Peace Corps volunteer near Pune in the late 1960s. She had sufficient comprehension of Indian social and political conditions. This aspect also influenced Carter's approach to India. Carter's deputing his mother to represent the US at the funeral of President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed early in 1977 struck a responsive chord in India. The feeling that Indo-US relations would improve was mutual. Three factors, however, adversely affected the eventual patterns in bilateral relations. Carter's categorical assertion that the US would be active, not just as an encourager of human rights but also as an enforcer of such rights in other countries and that this would be a determining aspect of the US's relations with other countries was the first factor. The second factor was that Carter had indicated that he would follow a tougher and sanction-endorsed policy against nuclear proliferation. India's not signing the NPT, apart from its political implications for Indo-US relations, was also to involve a review by Washington of Indo-US cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, specifically the future prospects of the supply of enriched uranium fuel for the Tarapore atomic power project (near Bombay). Though Carter talked about supporting democracy and isolating totalitarian regimes, his government remained fully supportive of Pakistan's economic and defence assistance requirements and also of that country's general position on Kashmir. This was the third factor. Carter's visit to India took place in this context. Earlier, Carter had sent a message through the US Ambassador to India,

Robert Goheen, to Prime Minister Morarji Desai that "if India would restrain [itself] from developing atomic weapons and agree to discuss non-proliferation, the United States would clear the pending Tarapore shipments" (of nuclear fuel). This was an important message because the US was being restrictive in sending nuclear fuel to Tarapore since the 1974 Pokhran nuclear explosion. The objective of Carter's visit to New Delhi in January 1978, according to the US sources, was to show that the irritants of the past had been removed and that there was a basis for better relations and better mutual respect and trust. Carter also indulged in the important gesture of not combining his visit to New Delhi with one to Pakistan as Eisenhower and Nixon had done earlier.

The Carter-Morarji Desai discussions led merely to some generalities because the latter firmly questioned the right of the US to sit in judgement on the processes of governance of other countries and their respect for human rights. While Desai assured Carter that India had no intention of developing nuclear weapons, he added that India was not going to compromise on its principled stand on non-proliferation issues. In other words, India would simply not become part of the discriminatory international or multilateral regime.

There was an amusing, though serious gaffe, at the beginning of the formal session of discussions at Rashtrapati Bhavan between Desai and Carter. The US President, without realising that the microphones were on, leaned over to his Secretary of State as Morarji was taking his seat and said something to the effect that "I told him [Desai] I would authorise the transfer of fuel now... It did not seem to make an impression on him.... When we get back, I think we should write him another letter, just cold and very blunt."

At the end of Carter's visit, a joint declaration was issued on behalf of the US President and the Indian Prime Minister called the Delhi Declaration. It was an holistic statement of ideals and principles. The chief elements of this statement were that the two heads of government emphasised their common support for democracy and economic development. They expressed their deep

opposition to the spectre of war and they promised that India and the US would do their utmost to resolve disputes with others amicably. The statement ended pontifically: "Ends can never justify evil means; nations like individuals are morally responsible for their actions." Carter, however, made a very important offer during the visit. He indicated that the United States would support a massive project to develop the Brahmaputra basin on the lines of the Indus Waters Accord of 1960 between India and Pakistan. Carter also mentioned that the World Bank would be willing to help in this activity. He said this would facilitate honourable and equitable water sharing among Nepal, India and Bangladesh. New Delhi did not respond to this offer on the basis of the argument that India would like to resolve the problem of water sharing with Nepal and Bangladesh bilaterally.

Given India's advocacy, over the years, that the problem of sharing waters below the Farrakka Barrage could have a durable solution only through linking up the river systems of eastern India and the Gangetic basin, New Delhi's rejection of the US offer appears baffling. In retrospect, we can realise that we made a mistake. India lost an opportunity to find a durable and equitable solution to this vexatious problem of water sharing through international support and international guarantees. There are reports that Indian experts indulged in the xenophobic argument that the Indus Water Accord resulted in India losing its legitimate share of the waters of the Indus basin. The objective fact, however, is that the Indus Water Accord has worked to the mutual satisfaction of both Pakistan and India and the arrangements envisaged under it were never seriously disrupted despite India and Pakistan having fought two wars since the signing of that accord.

In June 1978, Morarji Desai visited Washington to reciprocate Carter's visit. While general cordiality continued, the substance of Indo-US relations was fraying. The question of the supply of nuclear fuel to Tarapore became increasingly controversial. The most recent act in the ongoing process was India's refusal to accept what was technically called "full scope safe safeguards" on all its nuclear reactors and plants. This arrangement stipulated that not

only should India submit to scrutiny its nuclear reactors built with foreign assistance under International Atomic Energy agency safeguards, but also apply such safeguards to *all* nuclear reactors and resultant activities which used material from such foreign-assisted reactors. India was already in the process of developing its own indigenous nuclear reactors and nuclear power generation programmes since the late 1960s. It was unfair to expect India to submit its reactors to external inspection and control when they were *entirely indigenous* and self-reliant projects.

Two other factors deepened the differences on nuclear and non-proliferation issues between India and the United States. The first was the negative reaction of the US establishment to India's acquisition of nuclear weapons capacity as demonstrated by the reaction of Washington to the Pokhran experiment by India in 1974. The second factor was India being compelled to keep its nuclear options open not only due to China's expanding nuclear weapons status but also because of definite information available to India about Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme which had commenced under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto between 1971 and 1972 and which was being actively encouraged by President Zia-ul Haq. There was an attempt by the US State Department officials to persuade India to accept the full scope safeguards on its nuclear programmes and projects during Morarji Desai's visit to Washington. Desai's Principal Secretary, V. Shanker, and some of his other senior advisers were of the view that given India's economic and technological needs, New Delhi should accept this US suggestion. Fortunately, both Foreign Minister Vajpayee and Prime Minister Desai overruled this advice. This stance, of course, did not help matters as far as Indo-US relations in general were concerned. Also, Indo-US economic relations could not show any qualitative improvement primarily because of the inner contradictions from which the Morarji Desai Government suffered. While Finance Minister H.M. Patel was a strong advocate of the liberalisation and privatisation of the Indian economy and was for encouraging US investment in India, Morarji Desai's Minister for Industry, George Fernandes with his socialistic ideological

commitments, was strongly opposed to this stand. This internal bickering resulted in India's economic policies remaining static without any change in basic orientations. The only impact of George Fernandes's policies on Indo-US relations was negative because the two major corporations, IBM and Coca Cola, were expelled from the Indian economic scene during his tenure in office.

Apart from the foregoing developments, there was also self-centred negativism on the part of the United States on certain aspects of the nuclear issue. After the Pokhran test and well into the tenure of Morarji Desai as Prime Minister, India kept on telling the United States that the latter could buy back the spent fuel rods from the Tarapore power station as Washington had certain objections to the reprocessing of this nuclear waste in other Indian reactors unless the reactors were also subjected to full scope safeguards. (The original Tarapore Agreement had envisaged India as having the option to process the spent fuel rods.) So, the storage capacity for Tarapore nuclear waste was limited. Since this reprocessing could contribute to India's nuclear weapons capacity, the US was opposed to New Delhi carrying on reprocessing after the 1974 nuclear explosion. The United States was not willing to pay the price for buying back the spent fuel rods; nor was it willing to allow India to use this material for further nuclear purposes, peaceful or otherwise. This issue caused a stalemate in Indo-US relations, which was ultimately resolved through the interim measure of France taking on the contractual obligations of the USA to supply enriched uranium to the Tarapore nuclear power station. And India was allowed to retain the spent nuclear fuel on the basis of assurances it would act with restraint on its nuclear-weaponising potentialities.

During Desai's term in office, the two governments did not move beyond structuring positive political atmospherics.

Moving on to Indo-Soviet relations, these were marked by relative distances between the two countries at one level, namely, at the level of general political and economic relations, and at another level in terms of personal interaction between Leonid Brezhnev and Morarji Desai. Brezhnev was sceptical and

suspicious of Desai's critical views on the Soviet Union and his pro-Western views, while Desai was profoundly critical of communist ideology and the authoritarian political system of the Soviet Union. Though Desai visited Moscow early in 1978, this trip can only be described as a non-event which did not make any lasting impact on Indo-Soviet relations.

On another front, Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit to China in February/March 1979 was much more significant and fruitful. It was during this visit that Chinese leaders, specially Deng Xiaoping, first conveyed the view that China would be willing to normalise relations with India without predicating the process on the resolution of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute. It was during the negotiations with Chinese leaders that Vajpayee suggested that Sino-Indian dialogue should be renewed to revive bilateral relations in those sectors which were non-controversial and which could be mutually beneficial setting aside the boundary question for the time being. This exchange marked a crucial positive shift in Sino-Indian relations. These relations were given a further momentum by succeeding governments in India and China.

Vajpayee's attempts at improving Indo-Pakistan relations were equally significant. Any Pakistani, when asked over the last two and a half decades as to who was the best politician in India as far as Indo-Pak relations are concerned, invariably gave the reply that Atal Behari Vajpayee as Foreign Minister was the most positively perceived Indian leader in Pakistani public opinion. Vajpayee's success in this regard can be attributed to two factors: first to his not having to prove his domestic credibility as a nationalist leader belonging to the majority community to Indian public opinion. Secondly, he had a deep commitment to work for subcontinental peace and stability which he could translate into policies with a certain amount of autonomy which no Foreign Minister of the Congress Government could because of the continuing and abiding institution of Congress Prime Ministers making their own pronouncements on important foreign policy matters. Both Vajpayee and L.K. Advani, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting in the Morarji Desai Government, visited Pakistan during 1978.

The fact that Morarji Desai did not appeal to Zia to pardon Bhutto was acknowledged as an act of non-interference by the Pakistani establishment. (Bhutto was "hanged to death" in Rawalpindi on 5 April 1979.) There was a tangible increase in official level exchanges between India and Pakistan under the influence of Vajpayee and Zia-ul Haq which marginally expanded cooperation in the fields of commerce, culture and sports. The most important event of this period was India and Pakistan signing a bilateral agreement with regard to the Salal Dam on 14 April 1978 in New Delhi. (This was the second most important water-sharing agreement between India and Pakistan after the Indus Accord of 1960.) These incipient positive developments, however, could not rectify the fundamental aberration in Indo-Pakistan relations. Pakistan continued to articulate the Kashmir issue in bilateral and multilateral fora. It also become increasingly critical of India's treatment of its Muslim minorities. These policy stances of Pakistan compelled unavoidable strong responses from Foreign Minister Vajpayee and other segments of the Indian establishment. Most importantly, it was from the end of 1978 onwards that Zia-ul Haq and the Pakistan intelligence agencies commenced subverting the Sikhs in India through the instrumentality of non-resident Sikhs from the US and Europe visiting Pakistan for pilgrimage purposes. It was during this period that senior separatist leaders such as Ganga Singh Dhillon established initial contact with Zia-ul Haq. The methods by which the Government of Pakistan started cultivating Sikhs for subversive purposes were prepared: first, to establish contacts with non-resident Sikh leaders and to attempt cultivating leaders of Sikh pilgrimage groups going from India to Pakistan to visit Nankana Sahib and Panja Sahib Gurudwaras. The second method was liberalising procedures enabling larger number of Sikh pilgrims to visit their holy shrines during the course of which Zia and senior Pakistani leaders would hold special meetings with them in an orchestrated and motivated exercise in conveying goodwill and friendship.

In retrospect, the question whether or not there was a real thaw in Indo-Pakistan relations during the Morarji Desai period

merits an answer. One cannot gainsay the fact that India made a genuine attempt during this period to normalise relations with Pakistan. The initiatives taken for high-level visits, for bringing about normalcy in economic and commercial relations, for making people-to-people contacts all came from India. Pakistan's response to these endeavours was not entirely negative. But it was selective. On certain economic and infrastructural projects like the Salal Dam, Pakistan's response was positive. Pakistan encouraged people-to-people contacts but with a negative motivation. While Muslim citizens of India were given free access to all parts of Pakistan, Sikh visitors to Pakistan were conscientiously encouraged for subversive purposes. Pakistan did not allow an across-the-board people-to-people interrelationship or broad patterns of cultural or intellectual exchanges. By the time Morarji Desai relinquished charge in August 1979, Indo-Pakistan relations were generally back to square one, linked to abiding controversies which affected them as a continuum.

Though the Janata Government of Morarji Desai lasted only for a brief period (from March 1977 to August 1979), to sum up, Foreign Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee made three major contributions to India's foreign policy which have not found due acknowledgement by the Indian foreign policy experts and the Indian strategic and national security establishment.

First, it was during Vajpayee's tenure that India acknowledged the importance of developing relations with Israel. Beginnings were made to establish political contacts and to discuss issues of security of common concern with Tel Aviv. The culmination of the process was Moshe Dayan's confidential visit to Delhi in 1978 which was later subject to much irrelevant criticism. It was the process which started in 1978 which culminated in January 1992, when India established full diplomatic relations with Israel.

The second contribution of Vajpayee was to initiate the processes of improvement of relations with China. As already stated, it was during his visit to China in 1979 that the terms of reference of the Sino-Indian relations existing since 1962 underwent a sea-change, namely, an acknowledgement that the boundary

dispute would take time to resolve. Also, both sides felt that since this issue was intractable, it should be put on the back burner, and both India and China should proceed to revive and expand bilateral relations in other spheres. Further, such an expansion of bilateral contacts, it was believed, would gradually create an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and confidence, which would provide the basis for resolving the boundary question. Finally, that as an interim measure the situation on the "line of actual control" should be stabilised. It should be noted that Vajpayee's discussions in Beijing took place just about two years after Mrs. Indira Gandhi restored diplomatic relations (in 1976) with China to full ambassadorial level after a gap of 14 years. K.R. Narayanan (who later became the President of India) was sent as India's Ambassador to China. It was Vajpayee's preliminary discussions which provided the basis for later concrete initiatives taken by succeeding Prime Ministers Rajiv Gandhi and Narasimha Rao.

The third contribution of Vajpayee was his marginal success in bringing down tensions in Indo-Pakistan relations during his foreign ministership. He visited Pakistan, established rapport with Zia-ul Haq and the Pakistan Foreign Office establishment which brought down the psychological and political temperatures which had gone up because of Mrs. Gandhi's advocacies on behalf of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and her somewhat distant and reserved approach towards Zia-ul Haq. Vajpayee was a political realist who believed in dealing with whatever power structure existed in Pakistan, because he considered a stable relationship with that country as an objective which should transcend ideological factors regarding democracy or personal aversion to military rule.

Even now, almost two decades after his demitting office as India's Foreign Minister in 1979, Pakistanis still consider his management of Indo-Pakistan relations as constructive and farsighted.

Let us now turn our attention to Indo-Sri Lankan relations. The Indian President Sanjeeva Reddy's and Morarji Desai's interaction with Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayawardene constitutes a pertinent footnote to main trends in India's foreign policy during this era. While

Jayawardene was imbued with deep antagonism towards the previous regime and its head, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Reddy and Desai had similar feelings about Mrs. Gandhi. The negative contributory coincidence was a deep friendship between Mrs. Bandaranaike and Mrs. Gandhi stretching back to the mid-1950s. The consequence was Reddy and Desai conveying all sorts of assurances to Jayawardene about India's willingness to compromise on various pending issues with Sri Lanka. They also emphasised that Mrs. Gandhi's intrusive interest in Sri Lanka, because of her friendship with Mrs. Bandaranaike, would be removed under the Janata Government. They also reportedly told Jayawardene that Mrs. Gandhi was a "spent force" in Indian politics. Subsequent events were to prove this prognosis completely wrong. Mrs. Gandhi came back to power in early 1980. There was an undercurrent of suspicion about Jayawardene which influenced her Sri Lankan policy.

With regard to Iran, India gave general support to the 1979 revolution there, which overthrew the Shah of Iran. Such support, while restoring some normalcy in Indo-Iranian relations, did not result in any substantive improvement in them, mainly because of religious intensities and other more important concerns of the Iranian Revolutionary Government.

In overall terms, it is surprising that the Janata Government led by Morarji Desai managed to focus attention on some highly important aspects of India's foreign policy despite the internal dissensions, ideological contradictions and lack of cohesion characterising the regime. While India was successful in addressing some of the more immediate problems, the overwhelming inner contradictions and the resulting short tenure of the Janata Government made it a very marginal contributor to the evolution of India's foreign policy.

Though controversial, one of the initiatives taken by the Morarji Desai Government during its short tenure was to initiate political and defence contacts with Israel (see also Vajpayee's role given earlier in this chapter). Israel's Defence Minister, General Moshe Dayan, was invited to make an official, but covert, visit to India in 1978. The visit was organised through the Prime Minister's Office

and the Indian intelligence agencies. The basic objectives were to explore possibilities of obtaining defence supplies from Israel and to forge arrangements for the sharing of intelligence between the two countries on terrorist and separatist activities of Islamic extremist organisations. Some progress was made during discussions between Moshe Dayan and the Indian authorities. But all efforts came unstuck because Dayan's visit to India became a matter of public knowledge through media leaks. India's support to the Palestinian cause and the credibility of the Indo-Arab relations came into question and became subjects of controversy. Thus, an attempt at establishing Indo-Israeli relations turned out to be stillborn.

It was only 14 years later, i.e., in 1992, that India and Israel could establish formal diplomatic relations and consequent politico-economic relations. Whatever criticism might have been levelled against the Morarji Desai Government's initiative related to establishing relations with Israel, on all counts, it was a practical and relevant initiative, regardless of the political fallout.

Prime Minister Charan Singh's Government, which succeeded Morarji Desai's Government, lasted for an even shorter period, i.e., from August 1979 to January 1980. Two significant events related to foreign policy during this period are worth recording. First, India's decision to allow Pakistan to join the Non-aligned Movement at the Havana summit in September 1979 and, second, Charan Singh's initial cut-and-dry reaction to the Soviet intrusion into Afghanistan in December 1979.

Let us discuss these two events in a little more detail. Pakistan had withdrawn from the US anti-communist alliance systems by March 1979. The Indian Foreign Office, suffering from an excessive unilateral goodwill syndrome, welcomed Pakistan into the Non-aligned Movement without examining its negative implications for India. Simply stated this meant that Pakistan would now get a platform to embarrass and to put India on the defensive in a forum where its (India's) influence had remained important up to that point of time. Admitting Pakistan to the Non-aligned Movement was of a piece with the Non-aligned Movement having

countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Zaire and Cuba among its members. India acquiescing in Pakistan entering the Non-aligned Movement was the first step in eroding the ideological integrity and basic terms of reference of the movement.

When Soviet troops directly intervened in Afghanistan between 27 and 29 December 1979, India was not altogether surprised, but the suddenness of the intervention was unexpected. The Soviet Ambassador to New Delhi, Yuli Vorontsov sought an urgent meeting with Prime Minister Charan Singh on 29 December, as far as I recall. The Prime Minister was not available immediately, so, ultimately, Vorontsov met the Foreign Secretary R.D. Sathe at midnight (29-30 December). Vorontsov eventually met Charan Singh on 30 December and explained to him the circumstances leading to the Soviet intervention from his country's point of view. He also pleaded for India's understanding of the Soviet Union's objectives in the context of the long-standing friendship between the two countries. Charan Singh listened to Vorontsov with a stone-faced and grim expression. Finally, Charan Singh categorically told Vorontsov that the Government of India could not endorse the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. He conveyed the view that military invasion of any country, particularly of a non-aligned country, which was a neighbour of India, was not acceptable to New Delhi and could not be justified, whatever the compelling circumstances may be. Charan Singh also told the Ambassador to convey India's suggestion to the Soviet Union that it should withdraw its troops from Afghanistan as early as possible. India's Permanent Representative at the United Nations, Ambassador Brijesh Mishra, sought to make a statement at the world body as soon as the matter came up there, i.e., in the first week of January 1980. Charan Singh's stand on the developing Afghanistan crisis, while principled and ensuring for India a high moral ground, did not take into account the socio-political impulses which led to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. In any case, Charan Singh's Afghan policy lasted for less than a fortnight after that. Mrs Gandhi won the general elections and came back to power as Prime Minister in the middle of January 1980. The guidance of Indian

foreign policy was back again in the hands of the Congress Party. This control was to remain for nearly a decade till December 1989, first under Mrs. Gandhi (up to October 1984) and then under Rajiv Gandhi till the interregnum occurred under the V.P. Singh and Chandra Shekhar regimes between December 1989 and June 1991.

Major foreign policy concerns of Mrs. Gandhi during her second tenure as Prime Minister pertained to (1) dealing with the crisis in Afghanistan, (2) coping with heightened levels of Pakistani subversion in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir and (3) adjusting India's relations with the superpowers in the context of the US President Ronald Reagan increasing the temperatures in the Cold War as a result of evolving political uncertainties in the Soviet Union under Brezhnev due to his failing health. She also had to orchestrate India's role in the Non-aligned Movement which was becoming ideologically amorphous and was subjected to inner contradictions and even military conflict between member-states exemplified by the Iran-Iraq war which commenced soon after her coming to power. She had to revive India's external economic and technological linkages which had gone into a limbo since her declaration of emergency in 1975 and which were in a drift because neither the Morarji Desai nor the Charan Singh Government succeeded in setting the house in order which would have reawakened external interests in the Indian economy and the Indian developmental processes. She had to define Indian attitudes regarding the fallout of the Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war in the Gulf and the West Asian region. She had to deal with an economically resurgent and politically assertive China on the north-eastern flank of India. All these tasks had to be undertaken apart from shouldering the multidimensional responsibility of stabilising the Indian polity which had come out of the trauma of the emergency and the political confusion which marked the Morarji Desai and Charan Singh regimes. She chose as her Principal Foreign Policy Advisers, Narasimha Rao (who later became Foreign Minister) and G. Parthasarathi who became Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee of the Ministry of External Affairs. Rao, with his scholarly qualities, his knowledge of history and

domestic politics, was the instrument chosen by Mrs. Gandhi to educate Indian public opinion to assist in creating a national consensus on India's foreign policy and to deal with the Parliament and intelligentsia on foreign policy issues. Parthasarathi, with his low profile and practical approach to diplomacy, had had a long career as one of the trusted envoys of Jawaharlal Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi. He was selected to function as a policy planner and a link between the government and the media on foreign policy matters.

Before proceeding with the analysis of trends in India's foreign policy during Mrs. Gandhi's last tenure as Prime Minister, I would like to digress a bit to point out that her policy of having a Cabinet Minister in charge of foreign affairs, while, at the same time, appointing a closer confidant as Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee, created dichotomies and undercurrents of tensions between the two individuals. For instance, from 1970 to 1974, she had D.P. Dhar as Chairman, Policy Planning Committee, and Sardar Swaran Singh as the Minister for External Affairs. Though the controversies never became public or nor did they come into the open, the chemistry between Swaran Singh and Dhar and later between Narasimha Rao and Parthasarathi was not compatible and led to a certain amount of battling for control over the foreign policy turf. It was Mrs. Gandhi's strong leadership and her dominating influence over political and administrative processes which prevented this negative chemistry from having too much of a debilitating effect on India's foreign policy. Objectively speaking, the Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee, being closer to the Prime Minister and being given responsibilities to manage foreign policy issues of special attention and interest to India, affected to some extent the institutional role and influence of the Foreign Minister and the Ministry of External Affairs in formulating and implementing India's foreign policy.

Getting back to the nitty-gritty, Afghanistan was the crucial issue on which Mrs. Gandhi had to focus attention immediately after reassuming charge in mid-January 1980. Though she was deeply disturbed about the Soviet military intervention there, she

had a deeper understanding of the causations behind the Afghan upheavals since 1973, when Prince Daud Khan overthrew the monarchy of his cousin King Zahir Shah and converted Afghanistan into a Republic ruled by a presidential form of government. She had followed the events that had culminated in the Saur Revolution of 1978 and also the subsequent opposition to this revolution by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, backed by the US. Her reservations about the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 was tempered by the valid perception that this intervention had taken place only because Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, backed by the US, were trying to subvert a critical exercise being undertaken by a segment of Afghan society to transform their country from its semi-medieval predicament into a modern society and stage. Mrs. Gandhi was also clear in her mind that the financial, technological and defence linkages between India and the Soviet Union were vital in securing India's economic, strategic and political interests. It was the Government of India's view that if New Delhi adopted a public and declared official stand critical and condemnatory of the Soviet Union, it would be detrimental to Indo-Soviet relations, particularly when there was no likelihood of any of the other great powers standing by India if the Soviet Union were to distance itself from India in retaliation. Thus, India could not afford to hop on to the bandwagon of criticism against the Soviet Union. In addition, the Indian motivation at that point of time was that if Afghanistan were to have a democratic, secular and modern democracy, this would suit India's interests in terms of New Delhi's adversarial relations with Pakistan. It is on the basis of these considerations that Mrs. Gandhi adopted a policy stance consisting of three main elements. First, India would convey its objections to the Soviet military intervention and the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan bilaterally to the Soviet leadership. Second, in multilateral fora, India would not indulge in one-sided criticism of the Soviet Union; India would advocate non-intervention in Afghanistan by all external forces and the creation of a democratic non-aligned government in Afghanistan. Third, India would be generally supportive of the Government in Kabul led by the

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Mrs. Gandhi, therefore, changed the instructions to India's Ambassador to the United Nations, Brijesh Mishra, and asked him to articulate India's modified policy so as to highlight the aforementioned three elements. Ambassador Mishra, who had earlier intervened in the UN debate to criticise the Soviet Union, had to change tack which he did not like very much in terms of policy and personal convictions. He reportedly urged New Delhi to remain constant with respect to the first principled stance that India had taken. But he was overruled. The policy stance adopted by Mrs. Gandhi on the Afghan situation, however, suffered from a basic flaw which one discerns with the benefit of hindsight. Mrs. Gandhi did not realise that the revolution which overthrew Daud was carried out with intense accompanying violence with the first two leaders of the revolution, Noor Taraki and Hafizul Amin, being murdered. However, the revolution did not have the backing of the Afghan people nor was there a general national consensus. The political party which spearheaded the Saur Revolution, the PDPA, was itself faction-ridden on ethnic lines. The Khalq faction represented the Pushtun, and the Parcham faction, the non-Pushtun ethnic groups constituting the Afghan nation (more details are given later in this chapter). The rural masses of Afghanistan (and it should be remembered that the Afghan population was predominantly rural) had no comprehension of the ideology of the revolution nor were they ready for the drastic processes of modernisation which the revolutionary government was trying to bring about in their country. Mrs. Gandhi and her government also did not fully comprehend the suspicions and apprehensions among the Afghan people about the negation of the Islamic religious identity in the ideology of the revolution and the policy pronouncements of the PDPA. This shortcoming was fully exploited by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the US in order to discredit the Afghan Revolution and to organise military opposition to it. Had the preceding factors been kept in mind, India's Afghan policy at that point of time could have been more finely tuned, thereby avoiding not only the criticism which India faced internationally but also the subsequent

alienation between India and Afghanistan after the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the overthrow of the Najib Government several years later.

The Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, visited New Delhi soon after Mrs. Gandhi assumed charge (in February or early March 1980) as far as I recall. The primary objective of his visit was to explain the circumstances under which the Soviet Union entered Afghanistan and to garner Mrs. Gandhi's support. As the official foreign policy spokesman of the Government of India, I was witness to these discussions. Mrs. Gandhi's Afghan policy was manifested with precise sophistication during these discussions. Gromyko gave a lengthy account of the background of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, concluding his representation with the remark: "Madam, I thank you for giving me a patient hearing. I hope you take note of the factors which led the Soviet initiative in Afghanistan and I hope you understand it." Mrs. Gandhi, as far as I recall, was brief and to the point. She said: "I have listened carefully, I take note of it and the factors and circumstances which you mentioned." She stopped there, she did not say that she understood the Soviet stance or the reasons for the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

At the ministerial level discussions between Gromyko and Narasimha Rao, India's reservations with respect to direct military intervention by the Soviet Union were conveyed to the Soviet Foreign Minister. Rao also clarified that India would maintain relations with the Karmal Government in Kabul and that India would continue to give economic and developmental assistance to Afghanistan. Gromyko's visit was followed by Narasimha Rao's trip to Moscow in June 1980. One of the objectives of this trip was to persuade the Soviet Union to withdraw from Afghanistan as soon as possible. The Government of India had received reports about draconian measures being taken by the Afghanistan Government and the Soviet troops against even non-violent protests against the intervention. There were other objectives behind Rao's visit which were related to certain important aspects of Indo-Soviet relations. Let me recount the incident which stands out in my

memory during the Gromyko-Rao discussions. This incident relates to Rao mentioning a case of Soviet and Afghan security personnel firing on Afghan schoolgirls in Kabul, because they had taken out a procession against the Soviet military presence in their country. Rao asked how could shooting of schoolgirls be justified, whatever may be the logic of the Afghan Revolution. Gromyko's response was cut and dry. He told Rao that those who oppose the forces of modernisation, secularism and democracy in Afghanistan deserve to die. He added that it was they who brought about this tragedy on themselves by opposing the inevitable historical forces. There was a turgid assertiveness in the Soviet stance. While India remained opposed to the Soviet intervention, it was even more conscious of the negative and extremist religious forces being encouraged by Pakistan, other Muslim countries and the US. Their policies were based entirely on the strategic motivation of containing the Soviet Union in terms of the logic of the Cold War. There was no concern in their creating and supporting subversive military groups against the Afghan Government for the predicament of the Afghan people nor was there any desire to understand the motivations of modernising Afghanistan which had generated the revolution of 1978.

Two basic accusations were levelled against the Government of India's Afghan policy of this period. The first was that India supported the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in contradiction to the principles of morality and international law. The second was that India did not respect the religious sentiments and the national feelings of the Afghan people. The validity or otherwise of these accusations necessitates a reference to the more contemporary historical background of developments in Afghanistan and of Indo-Afghan relations.

First of all, an assessment of the nature of revolutions and transformations that have taken place in Afghanistan since the overthrow of the monarchy personified by Zahir Shah would be in order. The change in Afghanistan's power structure brought about the coup led by Daud was essentially in the nature of a family feud. I make this claim while acknowledging that my statement

could be described by experts with an obsession for intricacies as an oversimplification. Daud, a cousin of King Zahir Shah, was essentially motivated by personal ambition. To come to power, he played upon the reformist aspirations of a group of Afghan intellectuals, political activists and the emerging Afghan professional and economic middle class.

Next, Daud's overthrow by Noor Taraki, in 1978, occurred because the former, instead of bringing about the social and economic changes which he had promised, had begun to run an almost monarchical government under the convenient label of a presidency, with pretensions to democracy. After that, Amin's violent overthrow of Taraki in 1979 and his being ousted by Babrak Karmal with Soviet help further botched up the objectives, orientations and content of the Afghan Revolution. Each overthrow degenerated into a political upheaval and triggered off factional fights within the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan.

Other momentous developments were in the offing. The intense suspicions and violent interaction between the Khalq and the Parcham, two factions of the PDPA, were not conducive to stabilising either the power structure or the political situation in the country. The Soviet Union, indulging in direct military intervention on 27 December 1979, only compounded the confusion, resentment and sense of crisis amongst the Afghan people.

In retrospect, it must be conceded that the objectives of the Afghan Revolution in the period stretching from the late 1970s to 1988 were indeed rational. Successive leaders had striven to modernise Afghanistan and to elevate their country's living standards up to those prevailing elsewhere in the twentieth century. They sought to achieve their objectives as follows: (1) By introducing land reforms and a national literacy programme, including one for girls; (2) by bringing about industrial and technological advances geared at contributing to the prosperity of the Afghan people; and (3) by establishing a moderate secular government which would not be subject to intrusive influences from any other country. The Saur Revolution failed, first because it

aroused the ire of the Muslim extremists in the Islamic world led by Pakistan, and also due to the suspicions harboured by the Western countries, as they felt that the revolution was going to affect their vested interests and influence in West Asia and the Gulf. These developments aroused strategic apprehensions in the USA and west European countries because the revolution was being supported by the Soviet Union. Once Taraki took over from Daud, Pakistan and the Western countries commenced subverting successive revolutionary governments. When Amin took over, a part of this subversion was aimed at winning him over to the Western side, to which he seemed inclined, even though it provoked the ire of his party colleagues. Amin quelled the opposition by resorting to extreme violence, a step which, in turn, provoked Soviet military intervention with the new President of Afghanistan, Babrak Karmal, coming to power backed by the Soviet forces. Ultimately, it was the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan which destroyed the credibility of the Afghan Revolution. This foreign presence also strengthened the internal Afghan reactionary, repressive and religiously fanatical forces which, with the support of the USA, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan reversed the historically important process which had commenced with the Afghan Revolution of 1978. India's approach towards Afghanistan was measured and correct throughout the period. A conceptual framework of India's Afghan policy during this period can be itemised as follows :

(1) India's primary interest was to ensure continuity in relations between the peoples of both countries.
(2) India firmly believed that the process could be sustained only if New Delhi supported trends and policies in Afghanistan which would make the Afghan people prosperous and the Afghan polity stable. Modernisation of Afghanistan was necessary for this purpose.
(3) India had no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and would deal with whichever government was *de facto* in power there. While India generally supported the

declared objectives of the Afghan Revolution, it was opposed to violence and also to the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan.

(4) While India did not oppose the Soviet move publicly or indulge in diplomatic polemics of an anti-USSR nature, it did convey its serious reservations about the implications of the Soviet military intrusion into Afghanistan, emphasising that, in the long run, this intrusion could be counterproductive.

(5) India was quite clear in its stand that an Afghanistan dominated by Islamic extremist forces and by the USA would not be in India's political or geostrategic interests at that time. This was one of the reasons why India did not oppose the Soviet action publicly.

(6) India was also clear that while it would not participate in any manner in the conflicts attendant upon evolving events in Afghanistan, it would continue bilateral cooperation with that country in the social, economic, hydel power, small-scale industry and health sectors.

These policy orientations were unambiguously conveyed to Karmal by Mrs. Gandhi and to the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Shah Mohammed Dost.

India, nevertheless, wished to establish contacts with the leaders of the Resistance Movement against the Soviet Union. It was well-nigh possible to establish such contacts with individuals who were operating from their bases in Pakistan. Indian Government representatives were in touch with prominent Afghan exiles in Europe, North America and other parts of the world. India also gave refuge to several thousand Afghan refugees who had left their country as a reaction to the Soviet intervention. We even maintained contacts with anti-Soviet resistance leaders such as Ahmed Shah Masood within Afghanistan. India was fully supportive of all UN efforts to remove external interference in Afghanistan and of the establishment of a national government which could bring about reconciliation among the various factions of that country. India cooperated with the two senior special envoys

of the United Nations who dealt with the Afghanistan issue from 1980 onwards, namely, Perez de Cueller and Diego Cordevez. For their part, Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, who led the Soviet Union during this period, were determined to implement their policy of intervention. The US, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Western democracies, and other important countries such as Iran and China were equally firm in opposing the Soviet stance.

India's attempts to play a moderating role did not succeed very much. We remained marginalised on the Afghanistan crisis in terms of international processes dealing with it. We, however, had a good relationship with the Afghanistan Government, which valued Indian friendship as a major factor contributing to its tenuous credibility in the international community.

Relations with Pakistan took a turn for the worse during the period 1977-84. The cordiality which existed between the Morarji Desai and the Zia Government lasted only for a brief period. Though Atal Behari Vajpayee was considered the most reasonable Foreign Minister by the Pakistani establishment and by the politically conscious sections of the Pakistani public opinion, the basic adversarial relationship between India and Pakistan did not undergo any notable change.

Mrs. Gandhi had returned to power almost within 15 days of Zia-ul Haq restoring the security and strategic equations with the US and the West. Zia's action was prompted by the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. India's reticence in criticising the Soviet Union and India's support to the left-oriented Government of Afghanistan were bound to generate further contradictions in Indo-Pakistan relations. Even otherwise, given Zia's memories of the 1971 war as a soldier, interaction between him and Indira Gandhi was bound to be tense. The Afghan crisis, while contributing to the consolidation of relations among Pakistan, the US, China and the major Islamic countries, increased the distances between India and Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi's message to Zia-ul Haq to spare Bhutto's life in early 1979 (when she was out of power) also affected Zia's mindset about Mrs. Gandhi and India under her leadership.

The orientation in Indo-Pakistan relations from Pakistan's point of view was articulated by Zia-ul Haq in a television speech on 5 June 1980. In this speech, he declared that consequent to the Indo-Soviet Defence Supplies Agreement, which provided for the Soviet Union supplying arms worth 16 thousand million rupees to India, Pakistan had to take care of its interests. He added that Pakistan would take every step to safeguard its sovereignty and national defence against the Indian threat. Zia, therefore, adopted a two-track policy of maintaining an adversarial stance towards India in substance while giving the appearance of desiring peace and reconciliation with New Delhi to the international community. India, on its part, worked for attaining normalcy of relations with Pakistan because, apart from general considerations underpinning this logical approach, New Delhi was keen to ensure that the arms meant for Afghan Mujahideen (being trained by Pakistan with the help of the Americans) did not get diverted to Kashmir.

Mrs. Gandhi took certain measures to establish ongoing links with Pakistan. She deputed former Foreign Minister Sardar Swaran Singh as a special envoy to Pakistan to discuss all aspects of Indo-Pakistan relations. During the period 1980-84, a series of high-level visits were exchanged between the two countries by Foreign Ministers Narasimha Rao and Aghashahi, by Indian Foreign Secretaries R.D. Sathe and M.K. Rasgotra and their Pakistani counterparts and by ministers in charge of trade, tourism, etc. Zia-ul Haq himself came to New Delhi for the 1983 Non-aligned Summit. The occasion was utilised for holding bilateral meetings between Mrs. Gandhi and Zia-ul Haq. India and Pakistan also exchanged drafts of a non-aggression pact and a no-war pact. The former suggestion was from Pakistan and the latter from India. These endeavours, however, managed to maintain only a superficial pattern of reasonableness between the two countries. They ultimately became cosmetic exercises, mainly because Pakistan recommenced its subversive activities against India precisely during this period. Pakistan also progressively assumed a threatening military posture against India. The cognisable trends reflecting these orientations in Pakistan's India policy were as follows:

(1) Zia-ul Haq accelerated the nuclear weaponisation programme of Pakistan.
(2) Pakistan launched a sustained diplomatic campaign against India, questioning the latter's credibility as a non-aligned country because of India's alleged support to the Soviet intervention against a fellow non-aligned country.
(3) The same campaign tried to project India as an anti-Islamic country because India was supporting the suppression of a Muslim country (Afghanistan).
(4) Zia started projecting the Kashmir issue — both in bilateral interactions and in the international fora — in a more assertive manner.
(5) Zia commenced his campaign to create, encourage and support the Sikh secessionist movement in Indian Punjab.

One could safely conclude that the period between 1980 and 1984 witnessed Pakistan repudiating the substance of the 1972 Shimla Agreement, though it did not formally withdraw from this agreement.

At this stage it would be relevant to elaborate Zia's role in supporting the separatist Khalistan movement. He sought to liberalise qualitatively the facilities for the Sikh pilgrims from Punjab to visit places of religious worship in different parts of Pakistan. He made it a point to meet them personally and also instructed the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan to establish a network of contacts with Sikhs coming from India. He simultaneously encouraged separatist sentiments amongst the prosperous and influential Sikhs who were non-resident Indians living in North America, the United Kingdom, Africa and South-East Asia. He also assisted in the establishment of contacts between Sikhs in Indian Punjab and their co-religionists living abroad. He started using Sikhs living abroad as a conduit for financing the Khalistan movement while the ISI provided arms, military training and sanctuary to Sikh separatists. India naturally had to resist these measures, which ultimately led to the tragedy of "Operation Bluestar" (when the Indian army entered the holiest

of Sikh shrines at Amritsar) in June 1984, and, subsequently, to the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi on 31 October that same year.

An adverse geostrategic development which further affected Indo-Pakistan relations was the opening of the Khunjerab Pass between Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) and the Xinjiang province of China. The Karakoram highway (linking POK and China) becoming operational was a phenomenon accentuating the geostrategic equations between China and Pakistan with potential negative implications for India's security.

In overall terms, Indo-Pakistan relations during 1977-84 were characterised by the following broad trends :

(1) Despite reservations about Zia's military coup, India acknowledged the reality of his being in power and accepted the fact that New Delhi had to deal with him for normalising Indo-Pakistan relations.India was, however, supportive of the democratic opposition to Zia. There was empathy for Nusrat Bhutto (widow of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto) and Benazir Bhutto (daughter of Bhutto) and the democratic movement they spearheaded.

(2) The US military assistance to Pakistan due to developments in Afghanistan increased Indian threat perceptions about Pakistan.

(3) Pakistan's nuclear weaponisation programme was viewed with concern by India.

(4) Zia's suggestions and proposals for normalising Indo-Pakistan relations were perceived by India for what they really were, namely, cosmetic public relations exercises aimed at the international community. India's negative reactions to Pakistan's proposal for a non-aggression pact can be attributed to the following reasons: (a) Pakistan's unwillingness to extend the provisions of this pact to Jammu and Kashmir; (b) the proposed Pakistani pact deliberately omitted the principles of the Shimla Agreement about bilateralism in resolving the pending issues; and (c) Pakistan's refusal to accept the Indian suggestion that if a non-aggression or a no-war pact came into

existence, it should also bind both India and Pakistan not to allow foreign military bases in their respective countries.

(5) While Zia encouraged exchanges of views between the two countries, he pulled back whenever these discussions reached the crucial stage of decision-making.

(6) India acknowledged that Zia was a shrewd and practical leader without any inclination towards military adventurism. We also took note of the fact that Zia's primary concerns were to consolidate his position within Pakistan and to achieve the objectives of the Pakistani establishment in Afghanistan. The basic Indian approach, therefore, was to continue contacts for bringing about normal relations to the extent possible and to firmly counter Pakistani moves against India in the political, diplomatic and security spheres.

Pakistan, in turn, perceived Mrs. Gandhi as an extremely assertive leader who had an antagonistic mindset towards that country. The memories of the defeat in the 1971 war impinged adversely on the military regime of Zia-ul Haq.

India's close relations with the Soviet Union and its tacit support to Moscow's Afghan policy were interpreted by Pakistan in negative strategic terms. Islamabad's view was that the Indo-Soviet strategic coalition, with similar possible equations with Iraq, could pose a threat to Pakistan's security and its interests in the Gulf. The Pakistani effort, therefore, was to maximise equations with the US, other Islamic countries and the Western democracies in order to propagate the anti-Soviet-Afghan strategic threat to Pakistan and to generate apprehensions about alleged Indian hegemonic designs in South Asia.

Zia also conveyed the impression that increasing political acceptability of the claim of self-determination in Afghanistan could be utilised to weaken India's stand on Kashmir. So, instead of a direct confrontation with India, he initiated a slow and continued process of subversion in Kashmir and Punjab. Creating centrifugal impulses within the Indian polity was Zia's prime motivation. His expectation was that such impulses would keep

India on the defensive and perhaps avenge Pakistan's 1971 military drubbing (at the hands of India), which led to the creation of Bangladesh, if either Jammu and Kashmir, or Punjab, or both, broke away from India.

Another significant development during Mrs. Gandhi's second tenure as Prime Minister relates to the President of Bangladesh, General Zia-ur Rehman's proposal for the creation of a South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) consisting of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. He made his proposal in public pronouncements and in messages to other heads of government in the region in December 1980. India's initial reaction to this proposal was reticent and sceptical. At that point of time, India's relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh, the two major countries of the region, were going through a difficult phase. Both these countries were under military rule, however camouflaged it might have been. Mrs. Gandhi's relations with Jayawardene's Government in Sri Lanka were also uneasy. India, therefore, viewed Zia-ur Rehman's proposal through the prism of these simmering antagonisms. There was a perception that the forum was being suggested as an instrument for the regional coercion of India. Juxtaposed with these considerations was the dilemma that if India did not join this forum it would be accused of being self-centred and a deterrent to a genuine effort to create institutions for stability and development of the region, despite being the most well-endowed country in the region with the greatest potentiality to contribute to such an effort. If India joined the group, it faced the possibility of its neighbours ganging up against it and using the SAARC institutions to generate pressure on various issues about which they had differences of opinion with India. In other words, India could be under pressure through this collective regional instrumentality.

After much introspection and extensive consultations, Mrs. Gandhi took the decision to join the negotiations for creating SAARC. She felt that despite the risks of facing potential collective pressure from its neighbours, India could not keep itself out of a regional grouping, the declared aim of which was to create political

and institutional mechanisms for generating cooperation aimed at the collective benefit of the peoples of the South Asian region.

India, therefore, joined the consultative process for the creation of SAARC. The negotiations were reaching their final stage when Mrs. Gandhi passed from the scene on 31 October 1984.

Moving on to Indo-US relations during the first half of the 1980s, these relations were overshadowed by American perceptions about the implications of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The US President Jimmy Carter's last year in power (1980) was spent by him concentrating on the American Embassy hostage crisis in Tehran. The crisis was defused within hours of Ronald Reagan becoming the President of the US on 20 January 1981. The new Republican Administration of the US was clear about the policy that it wanted to follow towards South Asia. Giving indirect military assistance to anti-Soviet Afghan guerrillas, renewing full economic and military assistance to Pakistan and providing humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees in Pakistan were the three planks of the new US policy. Reagan's foreign policy adviser, Alexander Haig, who was Kissinger's deputy during the Bangladesh crisis, held a jaded view of Mrs. Gandhi and had little interest in India except for strategic considerations related to the Soviet thrust into South Asia. Reagan's attitude towards India, while not as negative as that of the previous Republican President Nixon, was not positive, either. India's close links with the Soviet Union and its stance on the Soviet presence in Afghanistan were viewed critically by the US establishment. The US attitude basically reflected a general criticism of India.

Mrs. Gandhi, while acknowledging the foregoing perceptions, desired a practical working relationship with the United States, as there were many fundamental interests of India whose fulfilment depended on a positive equation with the Americans. India still needed enriched uranium fuel for the Tarapore atomic power project which served Maharashtra, Gujarat and parts of Madhya Pradesh. India was increasingly dependent on the multilateral financial institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank, for financial inputs into its development programmes. Mrs. Gandhi was

clear in her view that she did not want India's credibility as an independent Non-aligned country questioned, or India to become a Soviet satellite if relations with the US became irreconcilably bad. While Mrs. Gandhi temporised on the USSR's intervention in Afghanistan, the presence of Soviet forces at the Pak-Afghan border was not welcome to India from the point of view of India's security and strategic interests. Sustaining an equation with the Americans was therefore important. There was also increasing awareness in India that overdependence on the Soviet Union for defence supplies would not serve India's long-term interests. India was conscious that defence technology available in the US and other Western democracies would be more contributive to India's technological capacities not only for the defence sector but also for diverse aspects of the Indian economy.

Uneasy relations prevailing between India and the Soviet Union due to the latter's presence in Afghanistan also impelled New Delhi to revive equations with the United States. Interestingly, a new factor contributed to India's positivism towards America during this period. The "non-resident Indian" community in the US had swelled to between 300,000 and half a million by the 1980s. This community constituted an ethnic group which enjoyed the highest per capita income amongst the immigrants in the United States of America. Social and family connections of this large immigrant community and the vested interests which they generated both in the United States and in India constituted an ingredient responsible for improving attitudes in India towards the United States.

Notwithstanding these positive orientations on the part of Mrs. Gandhi, the US State Department and the US Defence establishment could not structure an adequate response to India. The United States signed an agreement with Pakistan in June 1981 (a few days after Narasimha Rao had visited Islamabad), offering arms worth 2.5 billion dollars, including the supply of advanced F-16 aircraft. This agreement was in the context of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. India's objection that this agreement would only fuel an arms race in the subcontinent was

rejected by the US which conveyed the view that aid to Pakistan was not aimed at India and that the US was not fuelling an arms race. The US also indulged in the specious argument that giving such massive military assistance to Pakistan would make that country give up its nuclear weaponisation programmes.

Mrs. Gandhi's attempts to open lines of communication with the US establishment through a series of special envoys did not bear fruit. She sent senior Indian diplomats, namely, B.K. Nehru, G. Parthasarathi and Eric Gonsalves, to Washington to convey India's interest in restructuring Indo-US relations on more positive lines. While President Reagan was polite and courteous, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Under-secretary of State, James Buckley and the US Ambassador to the United Nations, Jean Kirkpatrick, did not help matters. They were candid in emphasising the US priorities and interests in developing a close political and security relationship with Pakistan. The US also blocked the $ 5.8 billion loan which India had applied for to the IMF not due to economic but political reasons. It was in this context that Mrs. Gandhi went to Cancun in Mexico in October 1981 to attend the summit of heads of governments of industrialised and developing countries to consider global economic issues. The Cancun conference, one could say, resulted in a breakthrough in Indo-US relations due to the personal equation which developed between Mrs. Gandhi and President Reagan at separate bilateral meetings. Reagan's advisers and the US media described their interaction as "positive personal chemistry". The ripple effect was definite improvement in the atmospherics of bilateral relations.

The result of the Cancun conference was that the US agreed to France supplying nuclear fuel for the Tarapore project while India agreed to abide by the commitments which it had made to the US about safeguards and inspections with respect to the Tarapore reactor. The US also abstained at the IMF as far the large-scale financial aid sought by India was concerned, instead of opposing it. Mrs. Gandhi also delayed a scheduled visit to Moscow, indicating that she would like to meet Reagan first in Washington. Mrs. Gandhi visited the US capital from 30 July 1982

onwards. Her official visit was taking place after a gap of 11 years. (Her previous visit was in 1971, known for the unpleasant encounter between her and Nixon during the East Pakistan crisis.) She articulated her policy objectives to the US media before she proceeded to Washington, emphasising that her major aim was to try to convince people that India and the United States could be friends even if they did not agree on all matters. She added that one of her objectives was to correct US misperceptions about India's relations with the Soviet Union. She asserted that while India was friendly towards the Soviet Union, that did not prevent it from being friends with, or trying to be friends with, the US and China. She focussed on the US criticism of India on the Afghanistan issue when she told American journalist Tad Schulz: "We didn't join the chorus of condemnation (on Afghanistan) but we do not approve of the Soviet presence there, and we have told them privately, as we have said publicly."

Fortunately, for both India and the US, Alexander Haig had departed from the scene. He had been replaced by the sober and reticent George Shultz as Secretary of State. At Washington, Reagan struck the right note while welcoming Mrs. Gandhi at the Rose Garden of the White House, stating that he hoped to broaden and deepen the dialogue which he had begun with Mrs. Gandhi in 1981 at Cancun. He stressed that the visit expressed the renewed recognition of mutual importance and strong constructive ties between India and the US. Mrs. Gandhi responded optimistically, describing her journey as an adventure in search of understanding and friendship to find a common area, however small, on which to build and enhance Indo-US cooperation.

Apart from the Tarapore compromise being formalised during this visit, Reagan and Mrs. Gandhi signed certain agreements to expand scientific and technological cooperation and cultural and educational exchanges between the two countries. The US development assistance to India was maintained at $ 100 million per year. The US also became supportive of an assistance of roughly $ 2 billion per annum from the World Bank and the IMF. Initial discussions also took place with regard to US defence

supplies to India. The United States gave a positive response to India's defence requirements in the spheres of heavy artillery and anti-tank weapons assistance. This response was, however, only at the political level. Actual defence supplies did not materialise because of Indian apprehensions that the US would cut off supplies in case of a conflict situation with Pakistan.

While Indo-US relations shifted to a positive track in terms of political atmospherics, the basic differences between New Delhi and Washington on strategic and security matters and on regional issues remained insurmountable. These differences of opinion were reflected in the manner in which India voted at the UN on resolutions which the US moved or which it supported. Ambassador Dennis Kux in his book *India and the United States – Estranged Democracies,* mentions that a State Department review of voting records at the United Nations for 1983 provides striking confirmation that India and the US continued to have major differences. India opposed the US position on 10 UN resolutions that Washington moved in 1983. In contrast, Pakistan voted in support of the US five times, Bangladesh four times and Sri Lanka three times. India sided with the US only on about 20 per cent of the issues, while it continued to be supportive of the Soviet Union in 80 per cent of the cases. Visits by Secretary of State George Shultz late in 1983 and by Vice-President George Bush in May 1984 reflected the non-acrimonious trends in Indo-US relations towards the end of Mrs. Gandhi's second tenure as Prime Minister. But the point to be noted is that despite the positive chemistry between Reagan and Mrs. Gandhi, there was no significant or qualitative improvement in the content of Indo-US relations during this period.

Relations with the USSR were characterised by a drift and a somewhat downward slide during Mrs. Gandhi's second tenure. There were two causes for this state of affairs: one personal and other political. Soviet leaders greeted Mrs. Gandhi with mechanistic formality and distance from 1977 to 1980, when she was out of power. This attitude was discernible despite the major contributions made by Jawaharlal Nehru and herself in forging and consolidating Indo-Soviet relations for nearly three decades. Mrs. Gandhi was

not a person who would forget slights easily. The political reasons for Indo-Soviet relations being in doldrums were Moscow trying to be even-handed between India and Pakistan between 1972 and 1978, when the Afghan Revolution created antagonisms between Moscow and Islamabad. The Soviet Union threatening to stop defence supplies, if India did not declare a ceasefire in the western sector during the 1971 war, still rankled with Mrs. Gandhi. The Soviet military intrusion into Afghanistan only compounded the negative situation. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko received a correct and cool reception when he visited New Delhi in 1980. Though he was given a patient hearing, Mrs. Gandhi gave clear indications that she was not happy with the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan.

One would be taken aback to hear that the Soviet leadership was equally put off by Mrs. Gandhi sending Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao to Moscow, in June 1980, to advocate Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan. Rao's nuanced approach of conveying that while New Delhi supported the objectives of the Afghan Revolution and supported Soviet endorsement of this revolution, India had reservations about the direct military presence of the Soviet Union in a non-aligned country, did not go down well with the USSR. President Brezhnev still considered Mrs. Gandhi's refusal to accept his proposal for an Asian regional security arrangement as an act of ingratitude regardless of her principled approach on this issue within the framework of India's commitment to Non-alignment. Indian President Sanjeeva Reddy's visit to the Soviet Union in 1981 worsened matters. Brezhnev, either due to some protocol considerations or physical illness, was not present at the airport to receive President Reddy. President Reddy took umbrage and indicated his unwillingness to participate in some of the programmes and social gatherings arranged during his visit. Soviet and Indian diplomats barely managed to prevent Reddy's visit from turning into a disaster. Mrs. Gandhi also correctly assessed that the Nixon-Brezhnev rapprochement in the early 1970s had created a strategic equation between the Soviet Union and the US, which would have had a negative impact

on Indo-Soviet relations because of Moscow's diminishing focus on India, though the broad trends of political, defence and economic cooperation was sustained between the two countries. International criticism of the Soviet Union's Afghanistan adventure made Moscow refocus attention on India, so that Soviet-Indian equations could lend some international credibility to the Soviet Union. The irony of the situation was that precisely because of the Soviet military involvement in Afghanistan, Mrs. Gandhi wanted to maintain a certain distance from the USSR. She wished to show increased rapport with the US and Western democracies to reverse the impact of New Delhi's reticent stance on the Soviet intrusion into Afghanistan. This was the background to the context in which she established equations with Reagan mentioned in the earlier sections of this chapter. Her delaying the visit to Moscow so that she could visit the US first in July 1981 did not escape the notice of the Soviet leadership.

Brezhnev's last visit to India was in December 1991–January 1992. In terms of its results this visit was a negligible exercise compared to the important decisions taken and agreements signed during the previous visits of Soviet leaders to India and vice versa. Brezhnev soon passed from the scene, and during 1983-85, the internal uncertainties in the Soviet Union under Andropov and Chernenko and the parallel domestic concerns in India about terrorism in Punjab cast their shadow over the content as well as the momentum of Indo-Soviet relations. A significant abortive and controversial suggestion, which came from the Soviet Union during this period, was a proposal that taking advantage of the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan, India should assume control over the whole of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and should take over areas across the line of control which were still under Pakistani occupation. The Soviet Ambassador to Afghanistan, Firkit Ahmedjanovitech Tabeev, was the conduit for this suggestion. He contacted me in the second half of 1982 and informed me that Soviet troops were moving into the Wakhan corridor on the northern flank of Jammu and Kashmir. He suggested, rather picturesquely, that it was time for the two great Asian powers, the Soviet Union

and India, to teach the Americans and Pakistanis a lesson. He affirmed that the Soviet Union would be supportive of any politico-military initiative which India wished to take to repossess the whole of Jammu and Kashmir and to resolve the Kashmir problem once and for all.

Being India's Ambassador in Afghanistan at that point of time, I was Tabeev's interlocutor. His suggestion was highly sensitive and politically explosive. I reported the suggestion verbally to G. Parthasarathi, the then Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee in the Ministry of External Affairs and Mrs. Gandhi's closest confidant on foreign affairs. I also sent a written summary of Tabeev's suggestion (by telegram) to the Foreign Secretary, M.K. Rasgotra. Rasgotra instructed me to come to New Delhi for discussions on the subject and, meanwhile, set in motion investigative operations through our concerned military and intelligence agencies to check whether the claim of the Soviet Ambassador in Moscow about a sufficiently large Russian military presence in the Wakhan corridor was factually correct. Rasgotra had ascertained, by the time that I reached Delhi, that there was no significant Soviet military presence in the Wakhan corridor. He also had information about Chinese military concentration in western Tibet, which was capable of strategic interdiction in case of massive Russian military intervention affecting Pakistan. Rasgotra firmly told me not to be taken in by Soviet suggestions to get India inveigled in the Afghan situation. Parthasarathi for his part, told me that Tabeev had made an adventurous suggestion and India taking any precipitate initiative of the type which Tabeev suggested would heighten Indo-Pak tensions, create a difficult situation with China and would generally arouse the criticism of the Western democracies led by the United States. Parthasarathi also made the correct assessment that the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan would not last very long.

The Soviet Union continued to remain in Afghanistan for six years after this suggestion was made. In retrospect, one wonders whether Tabeev's aim was to embroil India in the Soviet misadventure in Afghanistan.

The Iran-Iraq war (which broke out in 1980) was another area of attention of India's foreign policy. Both countries were important to India. India's economic and political relations with Iraq were good. Moreover, India was among the first countries to recognise the Islamic Revolutionary Government of Iran. Both were Non-aligned countries. India as a major Non-aligned power was deeply interested in bringing the Iran-Iraq conflict to an end. Mrs. Gandhi agreed to be an active participant in the mediatory initiative taken by Cuba as the Chairman of the Non-aligned Movement at that point of time. Cuban Foreign Minister M. Malmeirca and his Indian counterpart, Narasimha Rao, spent a lot of time in shuttle diplomacy between Iran and Iraq and in the Gulf countries. This turned out to be a futile political exercise. India evidently did not fully comprehend the abrasive and involuted psyche of Iraq's Saddam Hussain or the passionate determination of the Iranians. One need not have got involved in this exercise. We should have remained distant and strictly neutral.

Iraq was to be the host of the 1982 Non-aligned Summit. The Iraq-Iran war, however, precluded this possibility. The summit was delayed by several months. India agreed to host the summit on the request of the members of the Non-aligned Movement in March 1983. The Asian Games in 1982 and the Non-aligned Summit and the Commonwealth Summit in 1983 which were all held in New Delhi were the major events reaffirming India's influence and role in the multilateral context.

Taking note of the emerging transitions in the international situation, namely, the success of the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) and the growing importance of the countries of the Gulf in strategic terms, and in the spheres of energy and hydrocarbons, Mrs. Gandhi set in motion processes of establishing high-level contacts with the leaders of these regions. Mrs. Gandhi visited the ASEAN group and the countries of the Gulf in order to initiate new arrangements for expanded cooperation between India and these countries.

In many respects, the most important development in India's regional equations was its getting involved in the Sri Lankan ethnic

conflict. The background is as follows: The simmering tensions between the Sinhala majority and the minority Tamils in Sri Lanka came to a flashpoint in the late 1970s and early 1980s, culminating in the explosion of anti-Tamil riots in July 1983. Nearly three lakh Tamil refugees fled to India. There was a groundswell of anger against the Sinhala majority government and sympathy for the Sri Lankan Tamils in nearby Tamilnadu, which had a cascading and similar effect on Indian public opinion. This resulted in Mrs. Gandhi's initiating a process which involved exerting pressure on the Sri Lankan Government to resolve the issue, while, at the same time, she made efforts at mediation. Sri Lanka was the major preoccupation of Mrs. Gandhi's foreign policy during the last two years of her tenure (till 31 October 1984). It would be pertinent to dwell in some detail on the bilateral as well as strategic motivations which impelled India's involvement in Sri Lanka in the 1980s.

India's interference in Sri Lanka, I prefer to call it the "Indian involvement" there, between 1980 and 1990 has been generally criticised on various counts: (1) as an act of unwarranted intrusion into a small neighbouring country, (2) as a first step towards imposing Indian hegemony on South Asia, (3) as a phenomenon based on erroneous political judgement, (4) as the "Vietnam" of the Indian army and (5) as a failure of India's foreign policy and diplomacy. With the passage of time and with the changes in the governments both in India and Sri Lanka, leading to changes in New Delhi's policies towards the island-nation, it is time to put matters in perspective and examine how valid the criticisms are. The first category of questions requiring answers is whether Indian support to Tamil aspirations and India's assuming the role of a mediator between the Tamils and the Sinhalese was avoidable? Was there any necessity for India to get involved in the Sri Lankan ethnic crisis? Was Indira Gandhi's generating pressure on the Jayawardene Government to meet Tamil aspirations legitimate, particularly between 1983 and 1984?

India's involvement in Sri Lanka, in my assessment, was unavoidable not only due to the possible ramifications of the

Sri Lankan Government's oppressive and discriminating policies against its Tamil citizens but also in terms of India's national concerns due to the Sri Lankan Government evolving security connections with the US, Pakistan and Israel.

It would be relevant to analyse India's motivations and actions *vis-à-vis* Sri Lanka in the larger perspective of the international and regional strategic environment obtaining between 1980 and 1984. President Reagan was in power in the USA and the Soviet Union was going through the post-Brezhnev uncertainties preceding Mikhail Gorbachev's arrival on the scene. Reagan was talking of "evil empires" and "strategic defence initiatives" to contain the pernicious intentions of the Soviets. The Soviet Union under Chernenkov and Andropov was equally confrontationist. The conflict in Afghanistan following the Soviet military intervention there was at its most intense. Pakistan was an ally of the United States and constituted Washington's main instrumentality in containing the Soviet advance into Afghanistan. The Zia-ul Haq regime in Pakistan was taking full advantage of American interest in utilising their country as a frontline state to further US strategic objectives in the Central Asian region. The *quid pro quo* which Pakistan demanded was political, material and military support to enhance its strategic capacities against India. Another pro-US nation, Israel, continued to be the northern point of the arc which the US Government was creating on the south-western flank of the Soviet Union, stretching from Turkey and via the Gulf up to Pakistan.

Sino-Indian relations remained uneasy despite the restoration of full diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1976. There was a parallelism in the US and Chinese interests in containing Soviet attempts at extending its area of influence in Afghanistan. India, being perceived as a supporter of the Soviet movement into Afghanistan, was being targeted by applying political and economic pressures to reduce the Soviet-Indian strategic equations and also political and technological cooperation. China and Pakistan were encouraging suspicions about India in Nepal and Bangladesh as part of this exercise. The rise of Tamil

militancy in Sri Lanka and the Jayawardene Government's serious apprehensions about this development were utilised by the US and Pakistan to create a politico-strategic pressure point against India in the island-nation located on the strategically sensitive coast of peninsular India. Jayawardene was apprehensive of support from Tamilnadu to Sri Lankan Tamils. He was personally averse to Mrs. Gandhi and was of the view that she should not control the Indian support to the Sri Lankan Tamils. He, therefore, established substantive defence and intelligence contacts with the US, Pakistan and Israel. At that point of time, the Government of India was subject to internal centrifugal forces in Punjab and Kashmir and portions of the North-East.

There was large amount of sympathy in Tamilnadu for the plight of Sri Lankan Tamils. Tamilnadu was governed by an ethnic Tamil political party, the AIADMK (All-India Anna Dravida Munetra Kazhagam) led by M. G. Ramachandran. Having positive political equations with MGR (as he was popularly known) was important to Mrs. Gandhi. The fact that the first constituted state of India which threatened to secede from the Union was Tamilnadu was part of Mrs. Gandhi's political memories. (The state then called Madras had threatened secession when Hindi was sought to be imposed as the national as well as official language all over India in the mid-1960s.) There was a perception that if India did not support the Tamil cause in Sri Lanka, and if the Government of India tried to question the political and emotional feelings of Sri Lankan Tamils, Tamilnadu would witness a resurgence of separatism. India could not, therefore, remain unconcerned in Sri Lankan developments during Mrs. Gandhi's second tenure. She, consequently, chose the option of supporting the Sri Lankan Tamils. As far as I can judge, it was not her intention to support the demand for Eelam, a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka, which would have resulted in the break-up of that country. If New Delhi were to endorse the claim for the establishment of a separate state on the basis of ethnicity and religion, which would disintegrate a neighbouring multiethnic, and multilingual state, then, India would find it difficult to maintain its own unity and territorial integrity in

view of the challenges thrown up by separatism in Punjab and Kashmir. Her intention was only to provide support to the Sri Lankan Tamils so as to generate sufficient pressure on the Jayawardene Government to make it responsive to Tamil aspirations and to ensure that Sri Lanka did not disintegrate. The political exchanges between India and Sri Lanka, between 1980 and 1983, confirmed this assessment. The anti-Tamil riots of 1983 and the Sri Lankan Government's draconian response to the violence, resulting in a large number of refugees crossing over to India, changed the contents of Indian policies towards the island-nation. Tamil militancy received support both from Tamilnadu and from the Central Government but only as a response to the Sri Lankan Government's military assertiveness against the ethnic Tamils. But this was also a response to Jayawardene's welcoming the expanded military intelligence presence of the US, Israel and Pakistan in Sri Lanka. The assessment in New Delhi was that such a presence would pose a strategic threat to India and the situation would encourage fissiparous movements in the southern states of India. Had not the anti-Tamil riots occurred, the Jayawardene Government's plan was to steadily increase the military capacity of the majority Sinhalese and to provide the US, Pakistan and Israel, a continuing presence in Sri Lanka in support of its anti-Tamil policies.

One ripple effect of such a plan would have been that Tamilnadu would have become disenchanted with the Central Government if the latter remained detached and formalistically correct about developments in Sri Lanka, which, in turn, could have led to some sort of Tamil secessionist movement in India. Such a development could have found encouragement from Pakistan and also the US given India's experience and their policies in relation to Kashmir and Punjab.

It was the anti-Tamil riots which precipitated matters. Emotions were running high in Tamilnadu. Mrs. Gandhi had to respond to the situation. Such was the domestic political and overall national security rationale which resulted in Mrs. Gandhi sending the Minister for External Affairs, Narasimha Rao, and the

Chairman of the Policy Planning Committee, G. Parthasarathi, to meet Jayawardene as special envoys. The objective was to persuade Jayawardene to reconsider his options on the basis of ground realities and the logic of regional geopolitics. The message conveyed was that India did not desire the break-up of Sri Lanka nor would India countenance Sri Lanka's policies which posed strategic threats to India. Mrs. Gandhi also made it clear that India was quite willing to mediate between the Sri Lankan Government and its Tamil citizens to evolve a realistic compromise.

One could well pose the crucial question: In normative terms and in terms of international law and principles of morality, was Mrs. Gandhi correct in giving political and material support to the Sri Lankan Tamils? The answer obviously has to be in the negative. Sri Lanka should have been allowed to sort out its own problems. India should not have interfered in any way and even if developments in Sri Lanka and the government's policies endangered India's interests, India should have tackled them domestically. Had Sri Lanka been several hundred miles away from the coast of India, this approach could have been adopted. But the nearest point of the island-nation was only 18 miles away from Tamilnadu. In the realm of international politics, interstate relations are not governed by the logic of morality; they were and they remain an amoral phenomenon. Unilateral adherence to morality, if it affects your very existence as a united country, may be admired as an idealistic principle. But it is neither desirable nor practical if another country deliberately indulges in policies which are immoral and which, at the same time, pose a threat to you. In such a situation, practical corrective action has to be taken. The Sinhalese Government's discrimination against the Tamils could not be considered correct or moral on any grounds. The Tamils were under continuous discriminatory pressure for nearly three decades after Sri Lanka achieved independence. The majority community compounded the situation by establishing political and security equations to further Sinhalese policies which posed a threat to Indian security. The Indian response was not just inevitable; it was imperative from the Indian point of view.

The Indian mediatory effort almost succeeded. The all-party conference convened by Jayawardene had agreed on a devolution package which Parthasarathi fashioned in consultation with Jayawardene and the Tamil leaders. It was Jayawardene who scuttled the proposals using the instrumentality of Buddhist clergy and opposition parties, claiming that he could not implement the proposals because there was no national consensus. It was at this stage that Mrs. Gandhi was tragically removed from the scene. Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated on 31 October 1984. Her departure marked not only the end of an important period in India's foreign policy but also it coincided with the emergence of undercurrents in international politics which were to transform the world within six years of her demise. Mikhail Gorbachev was about to assume supreme leadership in the Soviet Union. Also, Sino-Soviet and Soviet-US relations were to undergo a sea change. The East-West divide in Europe was to come to an end. Détente was to replace the Cold War strategies and attitudes. The vigour and the purposiveness of the Non-aligned Movement were ebbing. Disarmament, arms control, nuclear non-proliferation, human rights and environment management and protection were emerging as new issues of global concern. Socialist ideological orientations in managing national economies were losing their efficacy and relevance. These trends did not emerge suddenly because of specific upheavals in a time-bound manner. They were present in international relations and in the global political and security environment in an embryonic form during the 1970s and in the first half of 1980s. Mrs. Gandhi was in power for more than a decade during this period. An overall assessment of the characteristics of India's foreign and defence policies at the terminal juncture of her long and eventful tenure would be relevant before concluding this chapter.

Mrs. Gandhi's basic political achievement was her success in removing the political uncertainties in India which were anticipated after the departure of a towering personality like Jawaharlal Nehru. She dispelled negative prognosis and anticipations both domestically and in the international community. She changed the moorings of

India's foreign and security policies from idealism to practicality and political realism, while sustaining their basic ideological framework. She sustained India's position and influence at the United Nations, in the Non-aligned Movement and other multilateral fora. She made India increasingly self-reliant in the spheres of nuclear and space technology and other related fields involving high-tech knowhow. She guided India's economic policies in a manner which made the country progressively self-sufficient in foodgrains and in the agriculture sector. She stabilised the South-East Asian security environment, ensuring for India a position of strength. This particular achievement merits conceptual elaboration. First the domestic political ramifications.

The 1971 victory in the war against Pakistan restored national self-confidence with regard to ensuring national security, after a gap of nine years. The trauma of 1962 had been remedied. Levels of national consensus on security and foreign relations reached a stage where the government reacquired a capacity for flexibility and forward planning in these spheres for the first time since the Nehru era. An amount of assertive jingoism inevitably permeated the collective Indian political psyche — not a desirable development.

India's neighbours viewed the defeat of Pakistan and the enhanced politico-military image of India with apprehension. Barring Bhutan, concern about India's intrusive and assertive intentions towards them became a factor in their threat perceptions and strategic planning.

Confrontations with Pakistan in the 1960s and the early 1970s, increasing political and defence cooperation between Pakistan and China, and Sino-US-Pakistani connections impelled India towards accelerating its nuclear technology activities. Such a decision had technical, political and strategic objectives. India conducted its first underground nuclear device test in the Pokhran desert region in Rajasthan in May 1974. From a political angle, this was a signal that India's objections to a discriminatory nuclear non-proliferation treaty were not just theoretical, but that these objections would be given substance in Indian policies. The technological message was

that unequal restrictions on developing countries' capacities to acquire nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes would not be accepted. The strategic message to the international community and to domestic public opinion was that the development of nuclear weapons and their deployment in India's neighbourhood and in the Indian Ocean region would lead to an adequate response from India which would augment its technological capacities in relevant spheres to counter any threat potential.

The confidentiality of the Pokhran test was successfully maintained till it was actually conducted. The international community was first surprised but soon turned very critical of the Indian nuclear implosion. India was transparent about the general technical details of the test and about the possible peaceful, non-military uses to which this newly acquired capacity could be put. India reaffirmed its commitment to utilise the country's nuclear capacities for peaceful purposes only. Objectively speaking, the test and subsequent assurances by New Delhi did not assuage apprehensions about Indian intentions in the South Asian region and amongst nuclear weapons powers.

Military defeat at the hands of India had already triggered off trends in Pakistani defence planning to acquire – if possible – unchallengeable military capacity *vis-à-vis* India. Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan, the creator of present Pakistani nuclear weapon capacities, was summoned by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to Larkana in Sindh from Holland. The meeting which commenced Pakistan's journey on the path of nuclear weapons acquisition took place in 1972, two years before India's Pokhran test. India's test resulted in Bhutto's semi-hysterical policy pronouncement that Pakistan would acquire its own nuclear bomb even if Pakistanis had to eat grass. Leaving aside the theatrical tone of the statement, the derivative reality was the beginning of a South Asian arms race with a more dangerous dimension: that of a nuclear arms race. Bhutto's elimination from the power structure of Pakistan did not divert or diminish Pakistan's orientations to acquire nuclear weapons. Zia-ul Haq, from 1977 to 1988, and Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, from 1988 onwards, have actively pursued the objective. Dr. Khan

publicly acknowledged Pakistan's nuclear weapons capacity in March 1987. After 1991, both Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif not only confirmed Pakistan's possession of nuclear weapons, but also threatened to use them against India if the necessity arose, in the judgement of the Pakistani Government.

Officials of the US State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) have expressed fears about a possible nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. This concern has been articulated by US Under Secretaries of State Peter Tarnoff and (Ms.) Lyn Davies, the former Director of the CIA, James Woolsey, and a number of others in Congressional testimonies and press interviews since the beginning of 1993.

Two developments in the subcontinent since the mid-1970s have affected India's security. First, Pakistan increased the size of its armed forces, modernised the entire range of its weapons systems, augmented its indigenous defence production capacities and acquired nuclear weapons and missile strike capacities. Secondly, Pakistan took advantage of the internal dissensions in the Indian polity and actively encouraged separatist movements and intercommunal tensions in India. Pakistan also sought the alienation of sections of Indian public opinion from the Indira Gandhi Government due to her declaration of emergency in 1975 and suspending of democratic processes of governance, which lasted till March 1977. Her electoral defeat and the advent of an incohesive Janata Government at the Centre under Morarji Desai provided the opportunity for Pakistan to achieve its designs. Pakistan organised Sikh secessionism in the Punjab, revived separatist militancy in Jammu and Kashmir and increased its subversive activities among the Muslim community of India through the insidious infiltration of Muslim educational institutions from the late 1970s onwards.

Other events affecting India's security environment negatively were the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the Iranian Revolution, which led to the reviving of the Pakistan-United States defence relationship with increased range and content. Sri Lanka's

intensification of its intelligence and security relations with the US, offering the latter a foothold at Trincomalee and broadcasting facilities to the Voice of America on the western coast of the island increased Indian concerns. Sri Lanka's seeking assistance from Pakistan and Israel to counter Tamil terrorism in response to India's support to Tamil aspirations also increased India's anxieties.

Activities of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in relation to Jammu and Kashmir and the Muslim population of India, instigated by Pakistan, and the implications of pan-Islamic extremism for Indian politics were critical to Indian security and territorial integrity. Increasing levels of Sikh terrorism leading to Indian security forces attacking the Golden Temple at Amritsar (Operation Bluestar, June 1984) marked a tragic and misjudged action, which alienated the Sikhs. Mrs. Gandhi's assassination on 31 October 1984 by her two Sikh bodyguards was the culminating expression of this alienation. Her violent demise had profound political significance for India's internal stability as well as for political and constitutional principles underpinning the structure of the Indian state. In the aftermath of her death, ethno-religious coherence and the governing principles of interreligious co-existence were eroded first and then became subject to fundamental enquiry about their relevance. Indeed, there were suggestions from segments of the Indian decision-making elite that the sustainability of the Indian state in its existent secular and pluralistic form should be examined *de novo*. Their theory was that socio-cultural harmony was perhaps more important than geopolitical unity in territorial terms.

The foregoing trends along with the profound transformations in international power equations which marked the period from 1977 to 1984 threw up challenges to be faced by the Prime Ministers who succeeded Indira Gandhi one after the other: Rajiv Gandhi, V.P. Singh and Chandra Shekhar.

7

Adjusting to a World under Transition: 1985-91

Rajiv Gandhi was propelled to the apex of the Indian power structure suddenly, against the traumatic background of his mother's (Mrs. Gandhi's) assassination on 31 October 1984. He was a reluctant entrant into Indian politics in 1980, when his younger brother Sanjay Gandhi's death in an air crash on 23 June 1980 led to Mrs. Gandhi insisting on his (Rajiv Gandhi's) coming to her assistance. Though he had no direct experience of governance or of conducting foreign policy, he had spent an intensive four-year period of apprenticeship, between 1980 and 1984, under his mother's guidance. He had initially functioned as General Secretary of the ruling Congress Party and later became Mrs. Gandhi's political adviser and confidant on foreign and defence policy matters. He had familiarised himself with the broad trends in international relations, through meetings, visits and discussions with his foreign counterparts in his capacity as a senior party functionary. Though a number of self-declared experts indulged in the value judgement that he had come to the helm of affairs without any background and experience, the criticism was not entirely valid.

Apart from his participation in politics since 1980, he had lived amidst the political milieu at the centre of the power structure of Indian politics since his childhood. He proved, during his prime ministership, his capacity to deal with the complexities of the world around him.

On the international front, in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev had assumed power in the Soviet Union; the east European countries were drifting away from Soviet overlordship; Pakistani intervention in Afghanistan, backed by the US, was at its peak; China was reaching the takeoff point in its economic restructuring and reforms programmes; and Ronald Reagan was about to enter his second tenure as US President and was establishing an equation with Gorbachev, which was to change US-Soviet relations dramatically, ultimately leading to the end of the Cold War.

When he took over as Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi was conscious of the changing international power equations and security environment which India would have to face. He understood the implications of the emerging Gorbachev-Reagan détente and the significance of the Vladivostok speech of Gorbachev. (This was the speech in which Gorbachev communicated his plans of liberalising and democratising Soviet politics and restructuring the Soviet economy, summed up in the concepts of "glastnost" and "peristroika".)

At that stage, India perceived the following factors and trends which would impact on its foreign and defence policies:

(1) The Cold War atmosphere was disappearing. US-USSR consensus on international issues would require adjustment by India and other developing countries whose policies till then were predicated on leverages available to them either with the US or with the Soviet Bloc (due to the Cold War).
(2) The Soviet political will to remain in Afghanistan was diminishing. Gorbachev's policies with respect to Afghanistan indicated the likelihood of Soviet withdrawal from that country. Such a withdrawal would increase the US

and Pakistani influence and options for them in the Gulf and the West Asian region.

(3) Pakistan itself was emerging as an assertive and self-assured identity in the South Asian region.

(4) The policies of changed leadership of the Soviet Union, and those of China's Deng Xiaoping would result in an increasing thaw in Sino-Soviet relations.

(5) The Chinese focus being on internal consolidation and economic development, and not being subject to the pressures of the Cold War and Soviet antagonism, could result in Beijing adopting a more tactful approach towards India. Deng had given such indications to India's Foreign Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee during the latter's visit to China in 1979.

While the older multilateral organisations and arrangements among the developing countries were losing their utility and sense of purpose (such as G-77, UNCTAD and the Non-aligned Movement), new centripetal forces were at work, resulting in the creation of regional and subregional groupings of cooperation for technological, economic and commercial purposes. The main objective of these regional associations was to fashion durable frameworks for ensuring peace and stability in their respective regions.

The potentialities and mechanisms as well as, the socio-economic policies for economic development, conceived and operated since the Nehru era, seemed to have reached their saturation point. Comparative inadequacies of somewhat similar systems in the socialist countries, particularly in the Soviet Union and China, were also noted by India. Consequently, India had to change gear and reorient its methods of economic management to overcome internal domestic socio-economic stagnation.

Regardless of the factual position of New Delhi's commitment to the principles of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence, regional perceptions about India were that it harboured hegemonic ambitions. This impression had to be defused and eradicated.

At the end of the fourth decade of India's independence, the nation was facing potent centrifugal pressures and secessionist tendencies in Punjab, Kashmir and the North-Eastern states. Such tendencies were actively backed by Pakistan.

Another factor New Delhi had to contend with was Pakistan's increasing nuclear weapons capacities transforming the South Asian military balance. Apart from Pakistan, India's other neighbours such as Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were forging political and defence relationships with the USA, China and Israel due to their threat perceptions about India.

The first priority of Rajiv Gandhi's foreign policy was to readjust India's relations with the two superpowers, namely, the US and the Soviet Union, in the context of emerging undercurrents in their interrelationship. His second priority was to deal with the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka and to cope with a more assertive Pakistan which was actively encouraging secessionism in Punjab and, to a lesser extent at that time, in Jammu and Kashmir. His third priority was to ensure necessary technological and resources inputs to modernise the Indian economy. His fourth priority was to sustain India's defence capacities to meet possible security challenges emanating from transitions and new alliances in the international strategic environment. In many ways, Rajiv Gandhi initiated a series of changes in India's foreign policy in its political and economic dimensions. He was not tied to the ideological or political socialist orientations of his mother and his maternal grandfather, his predecessors as Prime Ministers of India. Nor was he excessively subject to the influence of events and memories of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, which carried a strong anti-American strain. He was inclined towards acquiring the most effective state-of-the-art technology and adopting the latest management methods for India's development and modernisation. Such an attitude resulted in a desire on his part to go in for a more open and expanded relationship with the USA. Mrs. Gandhi had created a comparatively amicable

atmosphere for Indo-US relations during the last two years of her prime ministership. Moreover, Washington put out positive signals about its willingness to expand technological cooperation and to enter into a joint security relationship with India. By December 1984, a month after Rajiv Gandhi assumed charge, India and the US had finalised a memorandum of understanding on technological cooperation. It was eventually signed in May 1985. Rajiv Gandhi visited the United States soon after in June that year. Former US diplomat Dennis Kux, commenting on the visit, states: "Rajiv Gandhi made an excellent impression on his American hosts, the handsome young Prime Minister differed from the preachy arrogant Indian stereotype. He was quiet, seemed to listen to what American leaders had to say, spoke softly but directly and had a touch of humour.... Even though Rajiv Gandhi made it clear that he was not going to alter the basic thrust of his country's foreign policy. [he pointedly visited Moscow before Washington], his change of style from his mother's made India look different." The US Ambassador to India at that time, Harry Barnes, commented: "This was a new start, good for India and good for the USA."

Rajiv Gandhi was accorded the honour of addressing a joint session of the US Congress, a privilege which was not accorded even to Mrs. Gandhi during any of her visits to the US. Vice-President George Bush was in personal attendance to Rajiv Gandhi during his trips to other parts of the USA. Rajiv Gandhi's address to the National Press Club in Washington went down well with the media, and with American public opinion. However, the hope that the beginnings made by Rajiv Gandhi's visit would result in across-the-board expansion of Indo-US relations in the following years was not fulfilled.

A review of the substance of bilateral relations with the USA during that period shows that the complexes and suspicions harboured by the US about India's links with the Soviet Union and about India's relations with Pakistan remained an influential factor in Washington's attitudes towards India. The aforementioned memorandum of understanding on technological

cooperation had envisaged that the US would supply the high-technology supercomputer XMP-24 to the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, to enhance India's weather research capacity and programmes. Discussions were also held about the US assisting India in manufacturing its light combat aircraft. US authorities had granted approval, in principle, for the transfer of these items to India. But they ran into difficulties at the implementation stage primarily due to political considerations. Apart from providing weather research outputs, the XMP-24 computer had also the capability of assisting India's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile research programmes. It would have proven to be a valuable instrumentality for breaking cryptographic codes and also for a large number of military applications. The scientific, intelligence and defence establishments of the US argued that this computer need not be given to India because its capacities could be extended beyond the professed objective, i.e., of using it for global weather research and connected agricultural purposes. Consequently, the United States pulled back from the commitment of giving this supercomputer and offered a computer with lesser capacity, known as YMP-14. Simultaneously, the assistance for building India's light combat aircraft also was soft-pedalled by the US defence establishment. The extensive military assistance being given to Pakistan by the US with the prime objective of pushing the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan ran contrary to Washington's willingness to have a closer relationship with India.

There were other hurdles too. For instance, India's somewhat ambivalent stand on the Afghan crisis, its support for the Sandanista Government in Nicaragua and its good relations with the pro-Vietnamese Heng Samrin Government in Combodia, generated antagonisms in the US Congress and the US establishment. As a result, the US Congress progressively reduced direct developmental assistance to India between 1985 and 1988.

With the passage of time, Rajiv Gandhi as well as the Government of India developed a sense of ennui about Indo-

US relations. New Delhi's desire for expanded bilateral relations with the US cooled off in the context of the US reactions mentioned above. Other factors such as India's continuing to maintain a close relationship with the Soviet Union, and India's insistence on safeguarding its vital interests in its interactions with its neighbours, particularly Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, seemed to confirm Washington's prejudicial assessment that India remained a Soviet ally and a aspirant for regional hegemony in South Asia. The US felt that this prospect should be resisted by it. Pakistan's increasing nuclear weapons capacities evoked a matching Indian response which not only sustained but also heightened differences of opinion between India and the US on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues.

Despite these setbacks, Indo-US relations maintained minimal realistic and positive orientations right up to 1989 when Rajiv Gandhi lost power in the general elections held at the end of that year. The increasing rapport between Reagan and Gorbachev was a contributory factor to this process. Some beginnings were made in Indo-US defence supplies cooperation during this period after US Defence Secretary Frank Carlucci visited India in the summer of 1988.

While Indo-US strategic and security perceptions differed and they were still subject to inherited complexes and attitudes, the Rajiv Gandhi era witnessed Indo-US relations becoming more practical and realistic. The terms of reference were to structure a working relationship to the maximun extent feasible, without excessive mutual expectations and devoid of acrimonious emotionalism.

Readjusting New Delhi's relations with Moscow in the context of changing Soviet policies towards the United States of America and China and dealing with strategic and security issues was a major foreign policy challenge tackled by Rajiv Gandhi. Gorbachev had come to the conclusion that the socialist/communist experiment could not succeed in managing the Soviet, particularly, the Russian, economy. He

was also of the view that the authoritarian nature of the Soviet polity (dominated by the Communist Party) and the Soviet Union's domination of the East European countries was not conducive to the long-term stability and harmony among the countries under Soviet influence. His assessment was that the Soviet Union could retain its power and influence in world affairs more durably if it were to democratise itself and replace its ideological and military domination of East Europe and Central Asia by a pattern of politico-economic relations based on equality and mutual benefit. Most importantly, he was of the view that the Cold War as well as the confrontation with China should be brought to an end. Gorbachev's foreign and domestic policies were Russio-centric, in some ways inward looking, in the belief that the future welfare of the Soviet Union could be better secured by giving up its assertive superpower military posture. Hence the doctrine of restructuring and openness, "perestroika" and "glasnost", which found expression in his Vladivostok speech. There were signals of more harmonious relations between the Soviet Union and the USA and between the Soviet Union and China put out from Washington, Moscow and Beijing. There were also indications that Gorbachev was changing Soviet policies in Afghanistan and preparing for an honourable withdrawal.

The Soviet Union was simultaneously reducing its political and strategic involvement in countries such as Nicaragua, Cuba and Vietnam. Similarly, the content and orientation of Indo-Soviet political and strategic equations were undergoing a change, moving away from the Cold War factors which earlier influenced them. There were dimensions in which maintaining substantive relations with the Soviet Union were important to India. First, maintaining a political equation to counterbalance any difficulties that India might encounter with China, Pakistan or the United States. Secondly, India was dependent on the Soviet Union for many inputs, especially in the high-technology sector. Thirdly, a major portion of India's defence supplies came from

the Soviet Union. Fourthly, Indo-Soviet trade and economic relations were very important from India's point of view. The Soviet Union was a very large market for Indian goods in exchange of which India was importing items related to the energy, industrial and manufacturing sectors of the Indian economy. The Soviet Union's generous and concessional approach towards India on these items of bilateral cooperation was not underpinned by purely economic or business considerations. They were based more on Soviet political and strategic considerations, both in regional and global terms. It was these considerations which were undergoing transformation in the latter half of the 1980s. Rajiv Gandhi had to adjust to them.

In some respects Soviet détente with Western Europe and the United States gave India the freedom of option to diversify its own political and defence relations with the Western democracies. Such freedom set in motion the process of liberalisation of Indian economic and foreign trade operations from the protective cocoon of strategic relations with the socialist bloc. On the other hand, India could not suddenly disengage itself from the Soviet Union in the defence and economic spheres as it would have destabilised its defence capacities and economic well-being.

Rajiv Gandhi, therefore, structured a policy of sustaining relations with the Soviet Union while gradually opening up lines of communication with the Western democracies specially with the United States of America.

Rajiv Gandhi and Gorbachev exchanged four visits between 1985 and 1989. Indo-Soviet relations were sustained; they even intensified in some aspects of defence and economic cooperation. The volume of bilateral trade increased; Gorbachev enhanced rouble credit facilities for Indian imports from the Soviet Union. Defence supplies continued, including the significant item of the Soviet Union leasing a nuclear-powered submarine to the Indian navy. The most important phenomenon was the agreement reached between India and the Soviet Union to cooperate at the highest levels of policy-making on vital

subjects such as disarmament, development and human rights. The terms of reference of such cooperation were detailed in the Delhi Declaration jointly issued by Rajiv Gandhi and Gorbachev on 27 November 1986. The main points of the declaration merit recounting:

(1) Peaceful coexistence must become the universal norm for international relations; conflicts must be resolved through peaceful political means, not military means.
(2) Human life must be recognised as supreme.
(3) Non-violence must be the basis of community life. This implies abjuring of violence and intimidation, inequality, oppression and discrimination, as they are immoral and impermissible.
(4) There must be a concerted endeavour to create mutual trust between nation-states.
(5) The right of every state to political and economic independence must be recognised and respected; the endeavour should be to build a new world order ensuring economic justice and equality of opportunity for all nations.
(6) Resources being spent on armaments must be channelled to social and economic development.
(7) It is the task of the governments to guarantee harmonious development of the individual in terms of his cultural, artistic and educational potential.
(8) The fulfilment of the material and the intellectual potential of the individual can be utilised to solve global problems such as food scarcity, population growth, illiteracy, environmental degradation, equitable exploration and utilisation of the resources of the earth.
(9) Outer space, oceans of the world and the ocean floor should be treated as a common heritage of mankind.
(10) The doctrine of deterrence and balance of terror in international relations must be replaced by comprehensive international security arrangements, as international security is indivisible.

(11) The important objective of the international community should be to create a nuclear weapons-free world which requires specific and immediate action for disarmament. India and the Soviet Union agree that such disarmament can be achieved through agreements on complete destruction of nuclear arsenals by the year 2000, barring of all weapons from outer space, a comprehensive banning of all nuclear tests, a complete prohibition on the development of new devices and weapons of mass destruction, a similar banning of all chemical weapons and the destruction of their stockpiles.

(12) India and the Soviet Union recommend the adoption of an international convention banning the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

(13) India and the Soviet Union agree that reducing the levels of conventional arms and armed forces would be an important contribution to the processes of general and complete disarmament.

Giving an assessment of the state of Indo-Soviet relations towards the end of 1986, Rajiv Gandhi observed that his wide-ranging exchanges with Gorbachev had raised these relations to a qualitatively higher level in trade and economics as well as in science and technology and culture. He asserted that the Indo-Soviet combined endeavour for ensuring peace and disarmament would move forward faster and with greater purposiveness than in the past. He stressed Indo-Soviet determination to stretch to the full their combined and vast potential for mutually beneficial cooperation. More specifically, the Soviet Union agreed to assist in the construction of the Tehri hydroelectric complex, the modernisation of the Bokharo steel plant, for setting up new coking coal mines in West Bengal and for oil exploration in that state.

The Soviet Union offered the special concession of meeting the local costs for these projects. Discussions with the Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Kamentsev and the President of the

Soviet Academy of Sciences, Dr. Marchuk, followed, which worked out details for expanding commercial relations and for enhancing cooperation in the high-technology sectors of energy and space, respectively.

The implementation of these objectives maintained its momentum till Gorbachev remained in effective control, i.e., till about the summer of 1989. But even between 1985 and 1989, Gorbachev's attention was focussed on issues related to Afghanistan, on finalising agreements on limitation and reduction of strategic arms with the United States and on managing internal instabilities generated by his domestic policies of economic restructuring and political liberalisation. More importantly, the Soviet support for India's specific stance on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and on sensitive issues, such as Kashmir, underwent a shift in the context of Gorbachev's desire to establish positive equations with the United States and the other Western democracies. Soviet diplomats in important capitals across the globe conveyed to their Indian counterparts the general assessment that India should not expect the Soviet Union to continue unqualified and categorical support which had been extended by it on various issues as before. As the Soviet economy started disintegrating due to the precipitate restructuring policies of Gorbachev, economic and technological cooperation with the Soviet Union also slowed down.

By the middle of 1989, Indo-Soviet relations drifted into a situation presaging the need for their complete recasting, which had to come about with Gorbachev's removal from the centrestage of Soviet politics and Boris Yeltsin replacing him. By the end of 1989, Rajiv Gandhi had also lost power and it was the new leadership both in India and Russia which faced the task of refashioning Indo-Soviet relations from 1990 onwards.

China also continued to occasionally engage New Delhi's attention although there was a hiatus in Sino-Indian relations between 1984 and early 1988. But this hiatus did not mean a lack of interest on the part of India in the profound changes occurring in China under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. India

was also conscious of China coming out of its supercilious isolation and establishing a more open relationship with different countries of the world. India took particular note of the thaw in Sino-Soviet and Sino-US relations. As mentioned earlier, Deng had told Atal Behari Vajpayee in 1979 that China was willing to have a normal relationship with India, and expressed the view that the intractable boundary dispute should be set aside while the two countries revived bilateral relations in other spheres which could lead to the creation of the required atmosphere of trust for solving this dispute. Rajiv Gandhi felt that this view of Deng should be taken advantage of in order to improve India's relations with China, the most important neighbour. While a gradual revival of cultural and economic contacts became part of India's policy, Rajiv Gandhi decided to move forward to establish a better political relationship with China. The most significant move that he made in this regard was to send P.N. Haksar, former senior diplomat and Principal Secretary to Mrs. Gandhi, to China as a special envoy on a confidential visit early in 1988. The basic objective was to explore the possibilities of an official visit by Rajiv Gandhi to China in response to a pending invitation. Rajiv Gandhi also sent his Special Secretary, G.K. Arora, and the Joint Secretary in his office in charge of external affairs, Ronen Sen, to China. Two old China hands were specially involved at the operational level at this point of time, namely, the Foreign Secretary K.P.S. Menon (Jr.), a former Ambassador to China, and the Indian Ambassador to China, C.V. Ranganathan, who had served in Beijing more than once in his career and was now India's principal diplomatic representative there.

The groundwork done by these senior diplomats led to the historical visit of Rajiv Gandhi to Beijing in December 1988. This was the first visit of an Indian Prime Minister to China, after a gap of more than a quarter century. At Beijing Rajiv Gandhi was received with the highest honours and great courtesy. Most importantly, he held extensive bilateral discussions with Deng Xiaoping during which the Chinese leader reiterated

his desire to normalise relations with India, to expand bilateral relations in all spheres and to initiate expert level discussions to resolve the boundary question. India's response was positive on each of these counts. The most important decision was the one taken by the two leaders to establish a Joint Working Group to be led by the Deputy Chinese Foreign Minister and the Indian Foreign Secretary to discuss issues related to the Sino-Indian boundary dispute and to prepare the ground for resolving it. It was also agreed that bilateral economic, scientific, cultural and technological relations should be revived and expanded. An agreement was also reached that India and China should initiate steps to reduce confrontation and tension along the line of actual control on the borders between the two countries. This was a major development in Sino-Indian relations after a gap of 26 years of simmering hostility. Rajiv Gandhi's visit laid the foundation for increasingly positive interaction between China and India from 1989 onwards.

It must be mentioned that the foregoing positive political developments were not devoid of tension-filled incidents during this period. Despite the practical and positive signals given by Deng, China had continued complaining about India's supporting the Dalai Lama of Tibet and generally conniving with the Tibetan secessionist movement. China was also undertaking an increasingly aggressive pattern of patrolling along the line of actual control which included bringing forward their border security posts.

Rajiv Gandhi was mindful of these trends. India's response to China's complaints were firm, emphasising that there was no change in New Delhi's policy of recognising Tibet as an autonomous region of the Chinese Republic. The Indian response to Chinese military activities on the line of actual control was assertive. The Chief of Army Staff, General K. Sundarji, orchestrated an operation involving forward positioning of Indian border security posts along the line of actual control in the eastern sector. This step generated some controversy and tension, but the decisive forward moving stance of India

stabilised the situation on the line of actual control. The Chinese receiving Rajiv Gandhi in 1988 was, in a way, an acknowledgement of the fact that a tense relationship with India would not serve Chinese interests. Developments in Sino-Indian relations from 1991 up to May 1998 have shown that Rajiv Gandhi's discussions in Beijing in December 1988 were a timely diplomatic move for stabilising the strategic environment in the Asian region in the context of the rapidly changing world situation.

The most sensitive exercise in foreign relations undertaken by Rajiv Gandhi was his mediatory effort to resolve Sri Lanka's ethnic crisis.

The next highly intense phase of Indian involvement in Sri Lanka was born as a result of the failure of the All Party Conference in the island-nation when Rajiv Gandhi assumed power in December 1984. Rajiv Gandhi maintained continuity in Indian policies but with certain significant shifts in emphasis and nuances. His assessment was that while Indian mediatory efforts were necessary and useful for their success, New Delhi must assume a more impartial stand between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, reducing the pro-Tamil slant in India's approach. The Foreign Secretary, Romesh Bhandari, described the shift as "India intends to have an Indian rather than Tamilnadu policy" towards Sri Lanka.

The meetings, discussions and negotiations on the Sri Lankan ethnic issue, which took place between March 1985 and December 1986, reflected persistent and painstaking efforts by India to persuade the Sri Lankan Tamils to move back from their extremist demand for a separate Tamil state and to give up violence and terrorism. India's advocacy to them was to accept a compromise which would substantially meet their aspirations and also give them devolved authority to manage their own affairs within the framework of a united Sri Lanka. At the same time, the Indian effort also involved persuading the Sri Lankan Government to give up its xenophobic ethnic approach towards their own Tamil citizens and to restructure their political system

in a manner which would meet the aspirations of the minority in their own country. Our suggestion was that compromises should be reached which would make Sri Lanka a harmonious country despite its elemental socio-ethnic diversities and simultaneously preserve its unity and territorial integrity.

While the Sri Lankan Government continued the pretence of negotiations, it prepared itself for a long and aggressive military stance against its own Tamil citizens. The ambiguities indulged in by the Sri Lankan Government in Thimpu, in Colombo, in Delhi and in Bangalore between May 1985 and December 1986 amply prove this point. These ambiguities reflected themselves in the Sri Lankans pretending to hold political negotiations while they carried on a systematic intensification of military operations against the Tamils.

Tamil political and military groups, with their historical memory of repeated betrayals of Sinhalese-Tamil agreements, with their knowledge of the Sri Lankan Government's negative intentions and their deeply felt subconscious apprehension that this government would not implement the compromises even if they were agreed upon, reached the definite conclusion that unless India took on the the direct responsibility of guaranteeing the implementation of any compromise solutions that may be reached, they would not be implemented. By December 1986, the Indian mediatory role was becalmed in the doldrums of the Sri Lankan Government's obfuscations and the recalcitrant attitude of Sri Lankan Tamil political and militant groups based on their genuine apprehensions. The massive military campaign launched by the Sri Lankan Government against Jaffna in January 1987, accompanied by the blockade of the Jaffna peninsula, confirmed the Sri Lankan Tamils' apprehensions and the legitimacy of their suspicions about President Jayawardene's intentions.

It would be pertinent to recall that the Sri Lankan military operations launched in January 1987 commenced within 25 days of the visit to Colombo by two Union Ministers from India P. Chidambaram and Natwar Singh and the finalisation of

what was called "the 19 December Proposals". These military operations convinced Rajiv Gandhi that Indian policies on the Sri Lankan issue required changes forthwith. These changes were: (1) India should firmly oppose the Sri Lankan Government's military operations against Tamils; (2) more direct political pressure had to be generated against Jayawardene to implement the devolution packages which had been finalised in negotiations between 1985 and 1986; (3) if India succeeded in the above two objectives, it should persuade Tamils to come back to the negotiating table; and (4) if these negotiations succeeded and a set of solutions resulted from the discussions, India should directly guarantee the implementation of the solution in one form or the other, through appropriate agreements. India, apart from being a mediator, should become a guarantor of compromises to give a tangible sense of security to Sri Lankan Tamils and to ensure that the Sri Lankan Government implemented the solutions agreed upon.

The foregoin elements in the evolving Sri Lankan policies of India were the result of a series of internal discussions which Rajiv Gandhi held with his political and civil services advisers. Making these elements operative depended on somehow persuading Sri Lanka to discontinue its military campaign against Tamil militants which was creating enormous hardship for the Tamil civil population in Jaffna. Rajiv Gandhi was, therefore, concentrating on meeting this primary objective between January and June 1987. One wishes that this objective had been met by political means. But that was not to be. It took a direct intervention by India to break the military blockade against Jaffna, culminating in the airdrop of supplies on 4 June 1987. There have been perorations from various quarters that India had violated international law by sending supplies by air to another sovereign country. It has to be remembered that India first tried to send these supplies by sea on the basis of normal negotiations. It was only when Sri Lanka refused to resolve the problem through bilateral political discussions that India had to take unilateral action. There are precedents of states and

governments taking such action for humanitarian as well as political purposes (see next paragraph). Though, technically, India's action might have been a violation of international law, in terms of humanitarian necessities, the action, in my assessment, was both politically necessary and morally justified. I would also add that India's decisive action generated enough confidence among the Sri Lankan Tamils which led to the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) sending the message via Singapore about the conditions on which they would be agreeable to come to a compromise with the Sri Lankan Government. It was also perhaps the Indian decisiveness to put pressure on the Sri Lankan Government to come to a compromise with the Tamils which found expression in the finalisation of the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 27 July 1987.

Speaking about the precedents similar to the airdrop of civil supplies by India, the Berlin airlift of 1961 is the closest parallel that I can recall. But if one compares the Indian involvement in Sri Lanka with the Soviet interventions in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968), the British-French intervention in Egypt leading to the Suez crisis, Turkey's intervention in Cyprus, breaking up that country, the USA's uninhibited interventions in Vietnam, Cuba, Granada, Panama, Libya and Haiti, the Chinese intrusion into Vietnam in 1979 and into the South China Sea, to lay claim to the Sprately Islands, it is incontrovertible that India's intrusion was not lethal; it was not to displace the legitimate Government of Sri Lanka or to erode the unity and territorial integrity of that country. India's being criticised for providing supplies required for the very survival of the beleagured Tamil population of Jaffna was, and is, a patent exercise in political and moral hypocrisy. The only party which was justified in being critical of India in objective terms was the Sri Lankan Government.

I accept the validity of the Sri Lankan Government's critical reaction because it was its authority and jurisdiction which were questioned by the Indian airdropping. Nevertheless, it was the Sri Lankan Government's own obstinacies and prejudices which

compelled India to take unilateral action. Providing rice, kerosene oil and life-saving medicines to a population of nearly a quarter of a million people in Sri Lanka, who were deprived of such essential commodities for nearly five months, was certainly no crime compared to invading countries, bombing them and imposing governments on them, which was the motive of other instances which I have mentioned earlier.

There has been widespread and repeated criticism of the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1987. The points of criticism are as follows: (1) Since the mediatory efforts of India had failed, it need not have taken on the direct responsibility of resolving the domestic ethnic crisis of another country. (2) Rajiv Gandhi rushed into the agreement and forced Jayawardene to sign it without really getting voluntary consent of all concerned. (3) Rajiv Gandhi desired the diplomatic success of pushing through such an agreement to divert attention of mounting domestic criticism against him regarding the Bofors howitzer deal and several other issues. There were charges that Rajiv Gandhi insisted on the agreement despite his being advised by the intelligence agencies and the armed forces not to take on the responsibilities envisaged in the agreement. Rajiv Gandhi should not have sent in the Indian Peace-keeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka. This was an unjustified military intervention into a neighbouring country. The alleged failure of the IPKF in neutralising the LTTE and its subsequent withdrawal signified a major foreign policy failure for India, which Rajiv Gandhi could have avoided.

To deal with the criticisms point-wise, the immediate consequence of the mediatory efforts of India having failed, by December 1986, was the military operation launched by the Sri Lankan Government against the Tamils. There were clear possibilities of a massive inflow of refugees from Sri Lanka into Tamilnadu and the state government taking a unilateral decision to support the Tamil cause in Sri Lanka. Any coercive attempt by the Central Government to stop the Tamilnadu authorities from supporting the Tamil cause in the face of the Sri Lankan

Government's militaristic intentions would have resulted in the revival of Tamil secessionism in India. In fact, the Government of India managed to lay hands on some ideological long-term policy documents prepared by the LTTE towards the end of 1986, which talked about the creation of greater Eelam consisting of Tamilnadu, the north-eastern provinces of Sri Lanka and certain areas of even Malaysia and Singapore where there was a sizeable Tamil population. Moreover, if India had not taken further initiatives after the failure of the mediatory efforts in December 1986, Sri Lanka would have continued the consolidation of its intelligence and security relationship with the United States, Israel and Pakistan. So, when the opportunity arose for a renewed effort to resolve the ethnic crisis, due to the messages exchanged between the LTTE and a journalist, namely, N. Ram of *The Hindu,* and between Ram and Gemini Dissanayake, Cabinet Minister for Development, it was logical for Rajiv Gandhi to respond to the opportunity. The message from the Tamils clearly stated that they would agree to any compromise only if India became a direct party to the agreement with the Sri Lankan Government, thereby guaranteeing the implementation of the proposals. The Government of India agreed to take on this extended responsibility for the larger cause of the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and to create harmony between the Tamils and the Sinhalese as well as to bring about normalcy and stability in India's neighbourhood. Sri Lanka was geographically proximate, and the Tamils' ethnic issue was sufficiently sensitive in terms of India's domestic policies, impelling Rajiv Gandhi to undertake the serious attempt manifested in the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement. India's national security concerns contributing to the process have already been highlighted.

The second criticism that Rajiv Gandhi rushed into the agreement coercing Jayawardene as well as the Tamils to become parties to it neither politically accurate nor factually correct. It was a "rushed agreement" only in terms of the chronological time frame in which it was negotiated and signed.

The devolution package and the constitutional amendments proposed in this agreement in order to meet Tamil aspirations had been under negotiation for nearly four years before formal talks on the agreement commenced. The agreement had been discussed with all the Tamil groups and with President Jayawardene, clause by clause.

Though both the Sri Lankans and the Tamils expressed some reluctance and also had some doubts, their recognised representatives agreed to the provisions of the agreement and endorsed its being signed. The agreement was preceded by discussions that Rajiv Gandhi held with all concerned in the Government of India, in the Government of Tamilnadu and in Sri Lanka. The actual process of negotiations, consultations and the finalisation of the agreement was completed in a period of little over a month. Rajiv Gandhi decided to sign the agreement only after all the concerned parties, specially President Jayawardene and the LTTE chief, V. Prabhakaran, consented. That both pulled back from the agreement later is a different matter altogether.

The allegations that Rajiv Gandhi desired a major diplomatic success to divert attention from domestic criticism which he was facing as a result of the Bofors scandal and other issues were not valid as far as I recall the behind-the-scenes events of that period. I participated in a series of consultations and discussions on the Sri Lankan situation at the highest levels of the Government of India. My meetings with the Prime Minister of India were brief compared with my interaction with his predecessors when I was in Washington, New Delhi and Kabul. Nevertheless, I did not detect or discern any subconscious motivation or undercurrent of thought processes on the part of Rajiv Gandhi linking his involvement in the Sri Lankan situation with his domestic political predicament. His motivations, in my assessment, were very clear. He wanted to ensure that no alienation took place in Tamilnadu. He desired India's national security concerns to be safeguarded from the negative ramifications of Jayawardene Government's ethnophobia. He

was also committed to the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. Even if I take note of the argument that Rajiv Gandhi was unlikely to be frank about his domestic predicaments and the desirability of redressing them by a foreign policy achievement, the fact remains that his closest political and civil service advisers would have given some expression to this concern of his in informal discussions and consultations. I do not recall a single instance where any of the ministers or any of my service colleagues mentioned such a motivation on the part of Rajiv Gandhi.

Despite the murky atmospherics which affected India's Sri Lankan policies, one significant shift in orientation during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister has to be taken note of. While Mrs. Gandhi's objective was to pressurise Jayawardene to be fully responsive to Tamil aspirations and to make him move back from the strategic equations which he was developing with countries such as the United States, Pakistan and Israel, Rajiv Gandhi adopted a more even-handed mediatory policy. He concentrated on diplomatic means and high-level political discussions to deal with the Sri Lankan situation rather than generating intrusive pressure. The irony is that despite his positive attitude and approach, he ultimately had to intervene directly in Sri Lanka. Regardless of criticisms of the contradictions in India's Sri Lankan policies, the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement could have succeeded had Jayawardene been sincere in implementing it, had the Prime Minister, Ranasinghe Premadasa, shown the wisdom of acknowledging that the agreement provided a practical compromise on a very complex issue, and had he not insisted on the withdrawal of the IPKF from Sri Lanka. Even more importantly, the agreement could have succeeded had India shown the political will and grit to complete the tasks which it had assumed and to fulfil the commitments which it had given to the Sri Lankan Government and the Sri Lankan Tamils to normalise the situation in that country (as envisaged in the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement). The manner in which our Sri Lanka policies from 1985 to 1990

failed proved again the international perception of India being a soft state; not a very happy thought. History will judge Rajiv Gandhi's involvement in Sri Lanka with greater precision and objectivity with the passage of time. In my perception, in his dealings with Sri Lankan leaders, he was fair in his motivations, as just and as practical as he could be in his policies and courageous in taking on onerous responsibilities to safeguard Indian interests and the well-being of a small neighbouring country despite the complexity of the issues involved. He took on a thankless job, and paid for it with his life. Whatever judgement may be passed about his Sri Lanka policies, the logic of his objectives, his deep commitment to India's national interests and regional peace inherent in his policies at that point of time cannot be questioned.

In the final analysis, India's Sri Lanka experience between 1983 and 1989 proves the validity of an axiomatic principle in international relations, namely, adhering to absolute principles of morality is the safest and the most non-controversial stance. Such adherence, however, is not possible because of the amoral nature of international relations. Safeguarding one's own national interests may result in compulsions which necessitate departing from absolute terms of reference of morality. Once one departs from these terms of reference to fashion and implement policies to meet one's own interests, one must have the grit, the patience and the stamina to follow up these policies till they achieve their objectives. If a country or people do not have such forbearance and political will, then the policies would remain inadequate and may even fail. Mrs. Gandhi, during her long years as Prime Minister of India, had acquired such grit and stamina and could impart this political will to Indian public opinion. Rajiv Gandhi had the same capacity to a great measure but he lived in more volatile times and in a more fractious ambience. Despite this limitation, he was purposive in meeting India's national interests. It was the government which succeeded his which decided to choose good conduct certificates from abroad as a more desirable

objective than completing a foreign policy task which was of utmost importance to India's interests in South Asia and for stabilising the situation in Sri Lanka.The island-nation being embroiled in continuing violence has been the consequence of this dubious choice.

Having indulged in this critical introspection, one still ruminates as to why India failed and did where did it go wrong. I would like to point out certain flaws in our Sri Lankan policy in holistic terms:

(1) While Mrs. Gandhi's being supportive of Sri Lankan Tamil aspirations was correct and justified, her policy of materially supporting the militant separatists was wrong. India's interests and the Tamil cause, which were oriented towards generating pressure on Jayawardene, could have been pursued by political and diplomatic means, rather than by material support to Tamil militants.

(2) Rajiv Gandhi's approach was more impartial as far as Sinhalese and Tamils were concerned. He pulled back from giving continuous support to Tamil militants. He, and all of us who advised him, were, however, not perceptive enough to fathom the deep psychological and emotional chasm between the Sinhalese and the Sri Lankan Tamils which went beyond socio-economic and political factors.

(3) We were overoptimistic about the change of mind in the Jayawardene Government and about the capacity for reasonableness amongst the Sri Lankan Tamils in general and and the militants in particular. This situation led India to sign the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement. Both Jayawardene and the Sri Lankan Tamils acquiesced in the agreement only for tactical reasons. They were both aware of the undercurrent of hostility. India, nevertheless, expected political will backed by military force to overcome the antagonistic groups' lack of sincerity and reasonableness. Our predications and expectations in this regard were way off the mark.

(4) The Indian mediatory effort leading to the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement and the despatch of the IPKF to Sri Lanka in 1987 were inevitable consequences of the activist posture that we took *vis-à-vis* the internal affairs of Sri Lanka due to our strategic concerns and domestic ethnopolitical compulsions.

Moving on to the other neighbours, it was a basically assertive Pakistan, poised for military and diplomatic success, that Rajiv Gandhi had to deal with. The political atmosphere was tense and, qualitatively, at a higher pitch compared to the previous 11 years or so. There were suspicions about Pakistan's hand in Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, which were plausible in the context of increasing political and material support that "Khalistan" extremists were receiving from Islamabad. Zia-ul Haq was claiming high moral ground *vis-à-vis* India on the Afghanistan situation. He had authorised military operations to capture the Siachen Heights (in the Himalayas), earlier in 1984, which was neutralised effectively and in time by Mrs. Gandhi and the Defence Minister, R. Venkataraman. The Pakistani move towards the Siachen Glacier had the twin objectives of capturing strategic heights, which would expand Pakistani control over the land salients stretching north-east towards the Karakoram ranges, and of creating a base for the politico-strategic revival of the Kashmir issue. Pakistan was taking full diplomatic advantage through its propaganda after Operation Bluestar (June 1984).

The benefit of hindsight enables us to realise that the world at large was also on the threshold of momentous transformations which culminated towards the end of the 1980s. The processes of European and ASEAN integration were under way. Despite the apparent laidback style of President Ronald Reagan, the US was becoming more assertive. It was projecting its power worldwide for the first time after its Vietnam experience and the Iranian hostage crisis. The USA's strategic interests had made it more supportive of Pakistan in terms of

West Asian and South Asian regional developments. It was in this regional and international context that Rajiv Gandhi assumed office. His predicament in terms of domestic politics was equally critical. India had been traumatised since Operation Bluestar and its culmination in Mrs. Gandhi's assassination.

Rajiv Gandhi's stance towards Pakistan during the early years of his prime ministership has to be viewed in the context of his overall approach to foreign policy issues. His public pronouncements and statements in Parliament between December 1984 and May 1985 provide some indications: ensuring continuity of elements in foreign policy geared to safeguarding India's vital interests while structuring new and original initiatives to resolve the problems at hand. He asserted: "A new generation had taken over the country." He reminded the people: "60 per cent of Indian electorate is below 40 years of age." He emphasised: "For nation-building the first important requisite is peace, peace with its neighbours, peace in the world." And to meet this imperative "one cannot remain mired in the past, one must remain flexible," he pointed out.

Zia-ul Haq first met Rajiv Gandhi on 4 November 1984 when he came to New Delhi to attend Mrs. Gandhi's funeral. At the end of the meeting, he told the Pakistani press and the public that he had received a positive response to his desire for improving relations between the two countries. While there was no change in the substantive aspects of Pakistani policies relating to Punjab and Kashmir, between January and May 1985, there was a general thaw in Indo-Pakistan interaction heralded by several positive developments. After a gap of time, Zia attended India's Republic Day (26 January) celebrations. The Indian Ambassador, K.D. Sharma, was invited by the Pakistani Army HQ to speak at the National Defence College. India's new Foreign Secretary, Romesh Bhandari, held a bilateral meeting with his Pakistani counterpart in Male (Maldives), on 1 February 1985 to explore possibilities of new positive beginnings. On 5 March Zia authorised the trial of those Sikhs who had hijacked the Indian Airlines aircraft in 1981. He

followed it up by also authorising the trial of those who had hijacked another IA plane to Lahore on 5 July 1984.

The first substantive discussions between Rajiv Gandhi and Zia took place in Moscow on 13 March 1985, where both had gone to attend the funeral of Konstantin Chernenko, President of the Soviet Union. This meeting resulted in Foreign Secretary Bhandari's visit to Pakistan between 4 and 6 April. His discussions covered the entire range of pending issues, including agreements for friendship and cooperation. But from June 1985 onwards the abiding adversarial psyche of Pakistan surfaced again. Pakistani Foreign Minister Yakub Khan, in an official statement in Islamabad, categorically rejected Indian claims to the Siachen Glacier which he claimed: "was a part of northern areas of Pakistan". The Pakistani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Zain Noorani, speaking in the National Assembly, asserted: "Rajiv Gandhi is repeating baseless statements about Pakistan's peaceful nuclear programme." He also reasserted Pakistan's presumed role of being the protector of Indian Muslims.

Rajiv's response as far as Siachen was concerned was to strengthen India's military control over the area. His response to Pakistan's nuclear programme and to Pakistani presumptions about protecting minorities in India was firm and measured, without polemics or political pyrotechnics. His overall approach was to encourage interaction where possible. Zia was not averse to this approach as Yakub Khan led a 14-member Pakistani delegation to India for the second meeting of the Indo-Pakistan Joint Ministerial Commission established during Mrs. Gandhi's time. Instead of the usual controversies which used to bog down any meaningful decision from being taken, this time around, not only were agreements for mutual cooperation signed but also separate arrangements on agricultural cooperation were brought into force.

Desirous of providing a new impetus to develop positive relations, Rajiv Gandhi appointed S.K. Singh, one of the seniormost Foreign Service officers, as India's new

Ambassador to Pakistan. Singh assumed charge in September 1985. Rajiv Gandhi and Zia had three more meetings, apart from the one in Moscow, during 1985. They met in New York towards the end of October (during the 40th session of the United Nations General Assembly), where they reaffirmed the decision to encourage discussions for increased economic cooperation and people-to-people contact. They met at Dhaka for the first SAARC summit on 7 December and at New Delhi on 17 December when Zia stopped over on his way back from Dhaka after his tour of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. During these meetings, both leaders agreed that Foreign Secretaries from both countries should carry forward the discussions, especially on finalising a bilateral agreement for mutual friendship, drafts for which had already been exchanged. While these generally positive orientations were being followed in a tenuous manner, Pakistani paranoia kept finding expression off and on. Speaking in the Pakistani Senate on 29 October 1985, Yakub Khan stated vociferously that in the event of any attack on Kahuta nuclear facilities, Pakistan would have no option but to retaliate with all its might. What was curious was that the provocation for the statement remained indiscernible. It remains so to date.

Despite the abrasiveness reflected in Yakub Khan's pronouncements and Zain Noorani's earlier statement, there seemed to be a general sense of ease in Indo-Pakistan relations. This was reflected at the macro-level with the Pakistan Minister for Finance and Planning, Dr. Mahbub-ul Haq, leading a high-power delegation to India between 14 and 16 November 1985. He was accompanied by the Secretary-General of Economic Affairs, Aijaz Naik, and Commerce Secretary, Mukhtar Masood.

Indo-Pakistan relations were characterised by some distances from 1986 onwards till Zia-ul Haq's death in an air crash in August 1988. Rajiv Gandhi's attention was focussed on dealing with other important events such as Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, critical developments on the line of actual control with China and domestic controversies related to importing the Swedish Bofors

gun. For his part, Zia-ul Haq was getting increasingly involved in the last stages of the successful politico-diplomatic exercise which led to the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1988-89. Zia's continuing to encourage disaffection in Indian Punjab and in Jammu and Kashmir added to the aforementioned distance. Indo-Pakistan discussions on a possible bilateral non-aggression pact or treaty of friendship, initiated in 1982-83, had also reached a deadlock because Islamabad would not agree to any provision in this proposed agreement relating to abjuring the use of force to resolve disputes and for provisions stipulating that neither India nor Pakistan would allow foreign military presence/ bases on their territories. New Delhi's general support to the Movement for Democracy in Pakistan naturally made Zia suspicious of Indian intentions. Indo-Pakistan relations were in one of their periodical drifts when Zia perished in an air crash near Bahawalpur.

India welcomed Benazir Bhutto's electoral victory and coming into power in November 1988. India conveyed a political message welcoming the revival of democracy in Pakistan after a gap of nearly 11 years. Indo-Pakistan relations took a turn for the better for about ten months, till July-August 1989. Rajiv Gandhi took the very first opportunity of having direct contacts with Benazir during his participation in the annual SAARC summit at Islamabad in December 1989. There was a euphoria in the political circles and the media that the two young leaders of India and Pakistan, devoid of the burdens of the complexes of partition, would open a new chapter of practical and friendly relations between the two countries. There was also the presumptive hope that Rajiv and Benazir would be able to deal with the controversial Kashmir issue without being subjected to the influence of past prejudices and rigid attitudes. It was agreed between the two Prime Ministers that while they would discuss the mechanism and procedures to deal with the Kashmir issue separately, India and Pakistan should move forward to resolve other pending problems which were more tractable, namely, ending of military confrontation on the Siachen Glacier, the

marking of the Indo-Pakistan boundary on Sir Creek, and fashioning confidence-building measures about mutual threat perceptions regarding the nuclear capacities of the two countries. They also agreed to revive the sessions of the Indo-Pakistan Joint Commission, apart from expanding trade and economic relations and liberalising travel facilities for people between the two countries.

In fact, Rajiv Gandhi and Zia had already organised discussions between the concerned agencies of India and Pakistan to end military confrontation on the Siachen Heights. Indian and Pakistani intelligence and military representatives had almost finalised an agreement about mutual withdrawal and redeployment of troops and about ways to protect them from the Siachin Glacier by mid-1988 before Zia's passing from the scene. Zia's sudden death put this agreement into a spin. New negotiations had to be undertaken by the Defence Secretaries of the two countries. There were a series of high level meetings between India and Pakistan between December 1988 and July 1989 which yielded positive results in terms of agreements and decisions. Rajiv Gandhi paid his first and only official bilateral visit to Islamabad on 15-16 July 1989. By the time of his arrival both countries had agreed to hold Joint Commission meetings. They finalised and signed an agreement to keep each other informed of their nuclear installations and not attack each other's nuclear facilities. Discussions between the officials of Home Ministry and Commerce Ministry led to agreements on liberalising travel facilities and expanding bilateral trade. Defence Secretaries and army commanders of the two countries also initiated the process of ending the confrontation at Siachen. Warm hospitality was extended to Rajiv Gandhi in Pakistan but there was one contradiction affecting the visit. Pakistan had the political expectation that in the euphoria of goodwill and in the atmosphere of hope generated by the youth of Benazir and Rajiv, he (Rajiv) would modify India's policies on Kashmir and would agree to discuss the future status of that state with Benazir. Benazir expected to claim this shift in India's foreign

policy, if it occurred, as a major political and diplomatic achievement. This expectation was misplaced. In a meeting on the morning of the second and the last day of his visit, he told Benazir that Kashmir's accession to India was non-negotiable. He conveyed the message that Pakistan should try to agree to a solution based on political realism and ground realities. Rajiv Gandhi reiterated this view in the press conference held at the end of his visit. Benazir was bitterly disappointed and took great umbrage at being thwarted in her expectations which, in any case, were unrealistic.

Though Indo-Pakistan Joint Commission meetings were held immediately after Rajiv Gandhi's return to Delhi and though a cultural agreement was signed, the Benazir Government pulled back from the policy of sustaining normal contacts and maintaining a stable relationship with India. It was obvious neither Benazir nor Rajiv could change their respective policies on the Kashmir issue as they were subjected to public perceptions about this issue and to resulting orientations in Indian and Pakistani public opinion on the subject. Benazir was subjected to additional pressures from other sections such as the Opposition led by the Pakistan Muslim League and the Islami Jamhuri Ittehad (IJI) as well as from the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and, above all, the Pakistani military éstablishment. Her abrasive and negative reaction towards India after Rajiv Gandhi's departure from Islamabad was also an exercise by her to prove to the aforementioned sections that she was firm and tough when the vital issue of Kashmir was at stake.

Rajiv Gandhi was soon enmeshed in the hurly-burly of the elections to be held at the end of the 1989. He had to simultaneously cope with the change in government in Sri Lanka, where Jayawardene had been replaced by Premadasa. This change resulted in additional criticalities in Indo-Sri Lanka relations. Rajiv Gandhi was also concentrating on taking follow-up action on his initiative with China and the proposals on disarmament which he had put forward at the United Nations

(for details, see later in this chapter). The positive trends in Indo-Pakistan relations were short lived as, by October 1989, Benazir had given the green signal to her army authorities and intelligence agencies to tighten the levels of subversion and violence in Kashmir. By December 1989, the Kashmir Valley was subject to widespread violence and Pakistan-instigated terrorism. Rajiv Gandhi's electoral defeat and his being replaced by a coalition government led by V.P. Singh coming to power at New Delhi generated the mistaken impression in Pakistan that India's vulnerabilities and political uncertainties would be such that the secessionist movement in Kashmir could be successful. Pakistan was again wrong in this anticipation as later events proved. Rajiv Gandhi's attempts to normalise relations with Pakistan, while based on a genuine assessment that a new generation of leaders would transcend earlier prejudices and controversies, was, at the same time, tempered by a clear perception of national interests and firmness about safeguarding them.

Indo-Pakistan relations soon reverted to the adversarial mode, a slide which could not be avoided.

Regarding Nepal, relations with that county went through a bad phase during the second half of Rajiv Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister. The king of Nepal resented the general support being given by India to the leaders of the Democratic Movement in his country. He also felt that Rajiv Gandhi's government's critical stance on the panchayati system of government in Nepal was an unjustified interference by India in its internal affairs. Leaving aside the technicalities of the misunderstanding which emerged between Nepal and India between 1986 and 1989, Kathmandu felt that it should become assertive in articulating its interests *vis-à-vis* India. There were suggestions for revising the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950. Complaints were voiced about India not providing adequate transit facilities for Nepal's trade despite the latter being a land-locked country. In general terms, a feeling was encouraged that India was domineering. Consequently, Nepal commenced

entering into substantial defence supplies arrangements and economic and power cooperation projects with China. Nepal's embryonic attempts at qualitatively expanding defence cooperation with China constituted a strategic development which India could not ignore. There was a breakdown in communications, or perhaps the bilateral pattern of communications became mutually assertive and abrasive. The culmination of the crisis was that India became strict about trade and transit facilities being extended to Nepal and the latter angrily protested against India's decision which it viewed as a pressure tactic. In retrospect, it could be said that perhaps the controversies could have been avoided. India could have been more patient in dealing with Nepal's complexes and concerns. For its part, Nepal could have been less provocative in terms of the nuances of its relations with China.

In terms of the broad patterns of India's relations with countries in the South Asian region, the conclusion that these relations had become uneasy and critical during the last phase of the Rajiv Gandhi era is unavoidable. The irony of the situation was that whether it was Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal or Bangladesh, Rajiv Gandhi had commenced his foreign policy exercise with positive intentions and a clear desire to change the domineering image that India had acquired in the minds of its neighhours during Mrs. Gandhi's tenure in office. Rajiv Gandhi's initial positivism was misinterpreted as a sign of his lack of experience and of his vulnerability by India's neighbours. They tried to take advantage of him by basing their policies on this presumption. Rajiv Gandhi's firm response to these policy stances of India's neighbours generated adverse reactions from them. The decisiveness and the directness of his response compounded the criticality of India's relations with neighbouring countries. Having articulated this critical evaluation, it has also to be acknowledged that Rajiv Gandhi was clear in his perceptions about India's interests and remained firm about protecting them.

A reference to the major foreign policy initiatives during this period in the multilateral sphere would be relevant. Rajiv

Gandhi participated in the inaugural meeting leading to the creation of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in December 1985. He also hosted the 1986 SAARC summit in Bangalore. While articulating India's attitude towards the SAARC in his speech to the inaugural session of this body on 7 December 1985, Rajiv Gandhi observed: "Today, we move from having a programme of cooperation to forming an association. A spirit of solidarity, sharing and unity of purpose has brought us together...certainly we have problems and difficulties and these do impose constraints on us. Enduring cooperation, is cooperation adapted to the realities of our condition. The model we have evolved for ourselves is a model which is in accord with our realities, our compulsions and our genius." He emphasised the significant political point: "We have not sought to melt our bilateral relationships into a common regional identity but are to fit South Asian cooperation into our respective foreign policies as an additional dimension. We have evolved modalities which do not allow bilateral stresses and strains to impinge on regional cooperation. Our cooperation tempers enthusiasm with pragmatism, and initiative with consensus." Consequently, India pursued a policy of forging cooperation with its neighbours in the fields of culture, tourism, trade and transfer of technology and information. New Delhi also indicated that despite political hurdles put forward by Pakistan, India would fully activate SAARC for regional well-being. At the same time, India was firm in ensuring that SAARC was not used as an instrumentality to pressurise it to compromise on disputes with its neighbours which would affect its territorial integrity or security interests.

Rajiv Gandhi took two major initiatives in the sphere of disarmament and non-proliferation, one in 1985-86 and the other in 1988. The first initiative pertained to the six-nation conference on disarmament whose concept was initiated early in May 1984, with Indira Gandhi and the Prime Minister of Sweden, Olaf Palme, taking the lead. Known in full as the six-nation, five-

continent initiative with Sweden, India and Mexico being leading entities, the objective was to move the international community at the national and multilateral levels towards complete elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction within a definite time frame. The experience gained through this initiative found final expression in the action plan for a nuclear-free, non-violent world order which Rajiv Gandhi proposed at the special session on disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly in June 1988. The action plan called upon the international community to negotiate and finalise a binding agreement, which was to be total and without reservations, to bring about general and complete disarmament. His proposals sought the elimination of all nuclear weapons in stages by the year 2010. In a speech to the third special session on disarmament of the UN General Assembly on 9 June 1988 in New York, Rajiv Gandhi made a comprehensive proposal for general, complete and non-discriminatory disarmament covering nuclear, biological and chemical weapons as well as missiles and all other weapons of mass destruction. The details of his proposals are worth mentioning:

> The heart of our Action Plan is the elimination of all nuclear weapons, in three stages, over the the next twenty-two years, beginning now. We put this plan to the United Nations as a programme to be launched at once.
>
> While nuclear disarmament constitutes the centrepiece of each stage of the Plan, this is buttressed by collateral and other measures to further the process of disarmament. We have made proposals for the banning of other weapons of mass destruction. We have suggested steps for precluding the development of new weapons systems based on emerging technologies. We have addressed ourselves to the task of reducing conventional arms and forces to the minimum levels required for defensive purposes. We have outlined ideas for the conduct of international relations in a world free of nuclear weapons.

The essential features of the Action Plan are:

First, there should be a binding commitment by all nations to eliminate nuclear weapons, in stages, by the year 2010 at the latest.

Second, all nuclear weapons states must participate in the process of nuclear disarmament; all other countries must also be part of the process.

Third, to demonstrate good faith and build the required confidence, there must be tangible progress at each stage towards the common goal.

Fourth, changes are required in doctrines, policies and institutions to sustain a world free of nuclear weapons. Negotiations should be undertaken to establish a Comprehensive Global Security System under the aegis of the United Nations.

We propose simultaneous negotiations on a series of integrally related measures. But we do recognise the need for flexibility in the staging of some of these measures.

In Stage I, the INF treaty must be followed by a 50 per cent cut in Soviet and US strategic arsenals. All production of nuclear weapons and weapons grade fissionable material must cease immediately. A moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons must be undertaken with immediate effect to set the stage for negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

It is already widely accepted that a nuclear war cannot be won and must not be fought. Yet the right is reserved to resort to nuclear war. This is incompatible with a binding commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. Therefore, we propose that all nuclear weapons be leached of legitimacy by negotiating an international convention which outlaws the threat or use of such weapons. Such a convention will reinforce the process of nuclear disarmament.

Corresponding to such a commitment by the nuclear weapons states, those nations which are capable of crossing

the nuclear threshold must solemnly undertake to restrain themselves. This must be accomplished by strict measures to end all covert and overt assistance to those seeking to acquire nuclear weapons.

We propose that negotiations must commence in the first stage itself for a new treaty to replace the NPT, which expires in 1995. This new treaty should give legal effect to the binding commitment of nuclear weapons states to eliminate all nuclear weapons by the year 2010, and of all non-nuclear weapon states not to cross the nuclear weapons threshold.

International law already bans the use of biological weapons. Similar action must be taken to ban chemical and radiological weapons.

The international community has unanimously recognised outer space as the common heritage of mankind. We must expand international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The essential prerequisite for this is that outer space be kept free of all weapons. Instead, there are plans for developing, testing and deploying space weapons systems. The nuclear arms race cannot be ended and reversed without a moratorium on such activity. It should be followed by an agreement to forestall the militarisation of outer space. This is also an indispensable condition for attaining the goal of comprehensive global security based on a non-violent world order free of nuclear weapons.

The very momentum of developments in military technology is dragging the arms race out of political control. The race cannot be restrained without restraining the development of such technology. We need a system which fosters technological development but interdicts its application to military purposes. The arms control approach has focussed on the quantitative growth of arsenals. The disarmament approach must devise arrangements for controlling the continuous qualitative upgradation of nuclear and conventional weapons. To achieve this purpose, the

essential requirement is increased transparency in research and development in frontier tecnnologies with potential military applications. This requires a systematic monitoring of such developments, an assessment of their implication for international security, and widespread dissemination of the information obtained. There is also need for greater international cooperation in research into new and emerging technologies for these technologies to open up new vistas of human achievement. Here let us recall the vision of an open world voiced by one of the most remarkable scientists of our time, Niels Bohr. In his open letter to the United Nations this day, 9 June 1950...he said: "The very fact that knowledge itself is a basis for civilisation points directly to openness as the way to overcome the present crisis."

By the closing years of the century there must be a single integrated multilateral verification system to ensure that no new nuclear weapons are produced anywhere in the world. Such a system would also help in verifying compliance with the collateral and other disarmament measures envisaged by the Action Plan. It would serve as an early warning system to guard against violations of solemn international treaties and conventions.

Beyond a point, nuclear disarmament itself would depend upon progress in the reduction of conventional armaments and forces. Therefore the key task before the international community is to ensure security at lower levels of conventional defence. Reduction must, of course, begin in areas where the bulk of the world's conventional arms and forces are concentrated. However, other countries should also join the process without much delay. This requires a basic restructuring of armed forces to serve defence purposes only. Our objective should be nothing less than a general reduction of conventional arms across the globe to levels dictated by minimum need of defence. The process would require a substantial reduction in offensive military capabilities as well as confidence-building measures to

preclude surprise attacks. The United Nations needs to evolve by consensus a new strategic doctrine of non-provocative defence.

The plan for radical and comprehensive disarmament must be pursued along with efforts to create a new system of comprehensive global security. The components of such a system must be mutually supportive. Participation must be universal.

The structure of such a system should be firmly based on non-violence. When we eliminate nuclear weapons and reduce conventional forces to minimum defensive levels, the establishment of a non-violent world order is the only way of not relapsing into the irrationalities of the past. It is the only way of precluding the recommencement of an armaments spiral. Non-violence in international relations cannot be considered a Utopian goal. It is the only available basis for civilised survival, for the maintenance of peace through peaceful co-existence, for a new, just, equitable and democratic world order.

This plan received wide support from world public opinion as well as a majority of the member-states of the United Nations. The proposal impelled the superpowers to move forward on strategic arms reduction and arms control talks. Even if the chemistry of power equations delayed the implementation of this Action Plan, in many ways, it was a major contribution both as a model and as a procedural framework to realise the objective of general disarmament.

Rajiv Gandhi participated in the Non-aligned summits at Harare and Belgrade in 1986 and 1989, respectively. The movement's vigour and purposiveness were on the decline during this period. But India focussed the attention of the movement on areas where it could make substantial operational contributions. Rajiv Gandhi was instrumental in the establishment of the South Africa Fund under the umbrella of the Non-aligned Movement to provide material and logistical support to the

struggle of the South African people against apartheid. The fund was also used to back up efforts of the frontline states in Africa which were actively involved in the freedom struggle launched by the African National Congress. India was chosen to be the Chairman of this trust fund. The fund played an important role in the concluding years of the struggle for freedom and equality in South Africa. It was Rajiv Gandhi's initiative which resulted in the creation of the Group of 15 countries of the Non-aligned Movement for encouraging South-South cooperation and for carrying out dialogue with industrially advanced countries. This initiative of creating the G-15 was to remedy the ambiguities and amorphousness of the Non-aligned Movement in its tackling of the socio-economic problems of the developing countries. While the Africa Fund, mooted in 1986, was a successful exercise, the creation of G-15 was not generally welcomed by the membership of the Non-aligned Movement. The feeling of the membership was that the 15 countries which were chosen to become the G-15 were harbingers of an elitist movement within the NAM. It was also felt that the members constituting the G-15 could not really represent he interests of the vast membership of the movement effectively. There were also doubts about the capacity and efficacy of this group acting as a liaising instrumentality with the G-7 (i.e., the industrially advanced countries).

The experiences of the last few years has shown that the G-15's functioning has been desultory since 1989. Even some members of this smaller group showed only limited interest in its activities and its objectives. Impactive factors such as the weakening of the multilateral transcontinental economic fora, the emergence of new regional groupings in economic, commercial and technological cooperation and the linkages between these groupings of important economic powers of the world effectively marginalised the utility and efficacy of the G-15, though it still continues to exist.

The world was on the threshold of profound ideological, strategic and economic transformation when Rajiv Gandhi

relinquished power on losing the general elections in India in November-December 1989. India had to adjust to an entirely new international environment and to changing power equations from 1990 onwards. These readjustments in India's foreign policy were to take place in the context of equally significant changes in the domestic politics of India. The challenge was to fashion new terms of reference for India's foreign policy because, by December 1991, most of the reference points which guided and influenced India's foreign policy since independence had become irrelevant or had disappeared.

8

On the Threshold of the Twenty-first Century: 1990-97

V.P. Singh succeeded Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister. He (V.P. Singh) had been Minister for Commerce, Finance and Defence at different points of time in his political career in Rajiv Gandhi's Government. He, however, quit his ministerial post (and the Congress Party) and joined Janata Dal to contest the 1989 general elections. His track record did not show his having any deep comprehension of India's national security interests or even internal security or stability concerns. Though he had led Indian delegations to economic, commercial and defence negotiations, his policy orientations on issues which he dealt with singularly lacked any integrated and perceptive vision about India's political or strategic position in the international community. These are value judgements which were confirmed by his brief performance as Prime Minister of India from the end of 1989 to the end of 1990. He chose as his Foreign Minister I.K. Gujral who had greater experience in diplomacy and international relations. The Janata Dal Goverment led by V.P. Singh was fractious *ab initio*. Therefore, it barely managed to cope with India's foreign policy demands and

defence concerns. In some cases, both V.P. Singh and I.K. Gujral mismanaged some foreign policy issues of direct interest to India. The main foreign policy issues faced by the V.P. Singh Government were (1) adjusting to the evolving political uncertainties in the Soviet Union and coping with the consequent drift in economic and defence cooperation with that country, (2) dealing with Pakistan in the context of the qualitatively increased Pak-sponsored intrusive militancy in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and (3) tackling the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka where President Ranasinghe Premadasa was bent upon scuttling the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement and on pulling back from commitments given by his government to meet Tamil aspirations. Over and above all, V.P. Singh and I.K. Gujral were confronted with the extremely dicey situation created by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 which led to the Gulf War in January 1991.

The Government of India dealt with the Soviet Union during the critical phase of developments in that country with a distinct lack of imagination regarding the evolving ground realities. Neither the Central Government nor India's diplomatic mission in Moscow made any attempts to diversify their contacts with the leaders of the emerging forces in the Soviet Union opposed to the Communist Party and to the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev. The political assessments made were also inaccurately deterministic, predicting the Soviet Union's continuation as a more loosely connected federation, when all discernible signals were flashing the message that Gorbachev was losing control and that not only the East European countries but also the Central Asian Republics were showing signs of breaking away from the USSR and reasserting their individual identities. Even within the Russian Federation, Gorbachev's position was becoming increasingly untenable, with the orthodox communists criticising him for his glasnost policy and liberal forces clamouring for the dismantlement of the ruling communist regime.

The Government of India may have monitored these developments, but the assessments and the prognoses made

thereon, were wrong, resulting in India being out of touch with the new forces which were to dominate Russian affairs and, by implication, the entire Soviet area of influence from 1990 onwards. The lack of correct judgement and the resulting drift continued for several months after V.P. Singh and his successor's (Chandra Shekhar's) Government lost power.

The manner in which V.P. Singh and I.K. Gujral handled the Sri Lankan situation, in my assessment, was even more inept and lacked any foresight. The provisions of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement (of July 1987) for meeting the aspirations and requirements of the Tamil ethnic minority were being implemented gradually, even though with reluctance, by the Premadasa Government. The main reason for Premadasa's falling in line was the firm commitment of Rajiv Gandhi (to implement this agreement) for which the presence of Indian Peace-keeping Force (which was a cardinal influence restraining the LTTE and consolidating the role of the Tamil Provincial Government in the Tamil areas of the island-nation) was mandatory. Despite Premadasa's pressure on India to withdraw its forces immediately, the clear message given to him during the last year of Rajiv Gandhi's tenure was that the IPKF would remain in Sri Lanka till the Tamils could develop a sense of stability and security. This stand was not reflective of any intention to prolong India's politico-military presence in Sri Lanka. Rajiv Gandhi had already conveyed to Premadasa that Indian forces were likely to exert sufficient pressure on the LTTE by September-October 1990 for them to return to the democratic political mainstream of activities. Rajiv Gandhi had planned a phased withdrawal of the IPKF by the end of 1990. When V.P. Singh came to power, he and Gujral succumbed to Premadasa's demands for the withdrawal of the IPKF. These two gentlemen rather abruptly and in a precipitate manner ordered the withdrawal of the IPKF. Instead of phased withdrawal, the IPKF was withdrawn entirely from Sri Lanka in March 1990 before the Tamil Provincial Government of the north-eastern province of Sri Lanka could gain full administrative and political control of the area.

The withdrawal of the IPKF left a political and power vacuum which the Sri Lankan Government could not fill. The LTTE took full advantage of the situation and resumed control of the northern and eastern areas of the island, from which they had been pushed out and isolated. The first consequence was the resumption of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka which continues till today. All that V.P. Singh and I.K. Gujral achieved was a spurious good conduct certificate from Premadasa about India having assumed a non-interfering position in South Asian affairs. And the second consequence was that Sri Lanka was subjected again to instability and was compelled to seek assistance from extraneous non-regional powers to deal with the resumed crisis in that country. This was a foreign policy decision which, in my judgement, was wrong on all counts: in terms of resolving the problems of Sri Lankan Tamils; in terms of bringing about stability in Sri Lankan politics; in terms of reviving potential threats to Sri Lankan unity and integrity; and in terms of India's regional strategic interests. And, most importantly, eroding the credibility of India as a regional entity, capable of contributing to peace and stability in the region.

India's reaction to the crisis in the Gulf due to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (in August 1990) was both ambiguous and pusillanimous. There was legitimate concern about the safety of the large number of Indians living and working in Iraq and Kuwait. This was a matter of high priority. Instead of dealing with the situation with cool rationality, the V.P. Singh Government reacted with apprehension and appeasement. India assumed a spuriously neutral stance without acknowledging the reality that Iraq had invaded a sister Muslim country and a fellow number of the Non-aligned Movement. India's Foreign Minister, I.K. Gujral, rushed to both Kuwait and Baghdad. Instead of expressing sympathy for the Kuwaitis who had been subjected to invasion, he only focussed on arranging for the repatriation of the Indian community to India via Jordan. He then proceeded to Baghdad and instead of negotiating with firmness with Saddam Hussain and instead of conveying to him the concerns of India

about his having instigated military conflicts with two neighbouring countries during the previous decade (first with Iran, and then with Kuwait), he managed to get himself photographed by the media warmly embracing Saddam Hussain, manifesting a general approach of bonhomie, when the whole world was looking askance at Saddam's behaviour. Again, India's image plummeted.

India's credibility at the United Nations and in the Non-aligned Movement as well as amongst the Arab and Gulf countries suffered grievously due to the policy stance that we adopted on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. There was even an extraordinarily unrealistic assessment from our mission in Baghdad that Saddam should be treated with kid gloves because he was not likely to be defeated by the combined forces of the international community under the UN umbrella led by the USA.

The year 1990 witnessed heightened tension with Pakistan because of that country's involvement in reviving terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, with the prime objective of providing support to the separatists. The abject manner in which the V.P. Singh Government surrendered to Pakistan-sponsored terrorists when they kidnapped the daughter of India's Home Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed (Rubaiya) in December 1989, convinced Benazir Bhutto that India could not hold on to Kashmir any longer and that the time was ripe to generate violence and instability in that state. The result was a breakdown in Indo-Pakistan relations, which had been revived with some new positive orientations by Rajiv Gandhi when Benazir came to power in the winter of 1988.

In order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the V.P. Singh Government and also the attitude of the Government of India towards Pakistan, Islamabad sent its former High Commissioner to India, Abdus Sattar, as a special envoy early in January 1990. Pakistani Foreign Minister, retired Lieutenant-General Yakub Khan also visited Delhi for discussions with Gujral later that month. He sought to revive the Kashmir issue,

demanding a compromise from India and generally talked about "war clouds gathering on the horizon of the subcontinent". In this case, Singh's and Gujral's response was firm in rejecting the Pakistani demand. Pakistan consequently escalated the proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir. Tensions rose to a critical pitch with mass rallies being organised on the Pakistani side of the line of control and along the international border in northern Punjab. There were also attempted large-scale civilian crossings into India which were resisted by the Indian Border Security Force. Financial assistance and arms supplies were increased by the Government of Pakistan to separatist militants who were backed by trained Pakistani military personnel to infiltrate into Jammu and Kashmir.

In this context, Prime Minister V.P. Singh issued a public statement warning Pakistan that if the evolving situation so warranted, India would take decisive military action against that country. The USA was sufficiently alarmed by Singh's statement to send the Director of the CIA, Robert Gates, to advise both governments to lower the temperatures and commence some sort of bilateral dialogue. Gates' mission was overinterpreted and overanalysed by certain academic circles in the US, with the media there asserting that he had visited the subcontinent to prevent an imminent nuclear conflagration between India and Pakistan. The fact of the matter is that there were no such inclinations on the part of either India or Pakistan. American pressure on Pakistan persuaded it to commence a bilateral dialogue with India for the limited purpose of reducing tensions between the two countries and for discussing political issues only in parantheses. Gujral readily agreed to participate in this dialogue. Institutional Foreign Secretary level talks commenced in the late summer of 1990. A series of these talks were held up to January 1994. They broke down at this point of time for a period of nearly three years up to 1997. Though Gujral desired stable and peaceful relations with Pakistan, his initiative remained stillborn.

Bilateral talks at the Foreign Secretary level resulted in both sides agreeing to put in place a number of mutual

confidence-building measures about exchanging information on the deployment of forces, about the timing of military manoeuvres and exercises, and so on. But on questions of substance the dialogue could have been held between deaf persons for all it mattered. Before the efforts to make the dialogue purposive could be consolidated, V.P. Singh's Government fell at the end of 1990 due to internal squabbles. Subsequently, an interim government headed by Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar came to power with the support of the Congress Party led by Rajiv Gandhi. Chandra Shekhar's tenure of about six months (between December 1990 and May 1991), though brief, resulted in the restoration of high-level political contacts between India and Pakistan. While V.P. Singh moved out of the political centrestage after December 1990, in Pakistan Benazir Bhutto was dismissed by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan in August that year. Nawaz Sharif replaced her as Prime Minister. Nawaz Sharif and Chandra Shekhar established a certain personal rapport when they met each other in March 1991 at the Maldives summit of SAARC. Apart from agreeing to continue Foreign Secretary level discussions, they also agreed to establish a direct telephone hotline between them in order to deal with urgent or crucial matters. This positive personal chemistry between the two Prime Ministers, however, did not translate itself into policies leading to a change in the adversarial relations between India and Pakistan. Though both Chandra Shekhar and Nawaz Sharif reduced the levels of polemical rhetoric, Pakistan's subversive activities in Jammu and Kashmir continued to increase; so did the Pakistani diplomatic and publicity drive against India on the Kashmir issue.

Chandra Shekhar met Nawaz Sharif again at the end of May 1991, in New Delhi, when the latter came to attend the funeral of Rajiv Gandhi. It was during this meeting that Nawaz Sharif made the suggestion that the Kashmir problem could be solved if India surrendered the Kashmir Valley to Pakistan while retaining Ladakh and Jammu within the Indian Republic. Chandra Shekhar, though a lame-duck Prime Minister at the

time, told Nawaz Sharif not to make patently unrealistic proposals.

The only other issue of importance which Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar dealt with was the Gulf War (January 1991). He eliminated the ambiguities in India's overall political stance on specific issues related to this war. He firmly declared that India opposed the invasion of one Non-aligned country by another. India joined the international community's call for Iraq to vacate Kuwait. India also allowed refuelling facilities for American aircraft proceeding to the Gulf to participate in the war. This later became a matter of controversy. The point to be remembered is that India was supporting a UN-sponsored and approved operation and not a unilateral US military initiative, whatever the realities may have been!

Chandra Shekhar's stint as Prime Minister was too short to make any definitive impact on Indian foreign policy. But it must be admitted that he brought precision in the orientation of, and purposiveness in defining the objectives of, India's foreign policy during his tenure. His approach to foreign relations, while underpinned by an ideological commitment to the basic Nehruvian terms of reference, was tempered by sound realism and common sense.

Meanwhile, India had to face another general election in May 1991 as Rajiv Gandhi withdrew his party's support to Chandra Shekhar in early summer that year over a seemingly trivial issue, viz., that he was put under surveillance by the Intelligence Bureau. Rajiv was assassinated on 21 May, in the midst of the elections, by an LTTE suicide bomber. The Congress Party bagged sufficient number of seats in the Parliament to form the government with the support of a number of other smaller parties. P.V. Narasimha Rao became the Prime Minister of India. After Jawaharlal Nehru, he was the first politician with a foreign policy background to become the head of government. (He had been Foreign Minister in the early 1980s and then Defence Minister and Home Minister.) His political experience was integrated in that he was knowledgeable

about both foreign policy and national security affairs because of the responsibilities which he had shouldered for nearly a decade before he reached the helm of affairs. Though there were uncertainties about the period for which he would be able to serve as Prime Minister, he was successful in completing his full tenure of five years (from June 1991 to June 1996). This period marked a crucial phase in which the transformed undercurrents of international politics were getting crystallised and were making a telling impact on the global situation. Rao's foreign policy initiatives and decisions were both purposeful and significant.

The ideal starting point would be a statement of the main events and reorientations in India's foreign policy which occurred during Narasimha Rao's prime ministership.

The Soviet Union disappeared as a major strategic factor in India's foreign policy. Rao, therefore, consciously initiated the process by which India established new links with the emerging power centres in a changing world situation. The United States, West Europe, Japan and ASEAN stood out as the new spheres of influence. India initiated a process of more intense and extended interaction with all of them.

With regard to the Middle East, taking note of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) itself starting negotiations with Israel and given the perceptions of India regarding transnational Islamic extremism, New Delhi established diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv. India decided to go in for normal political, economic, technological and some defence cooperation with Israel.

Regarding other areas of interest, Narasimha Rao took special note of the emerging political realities in South Africa, taking the foreign policy decision to recognise and also to establish full-fledged bilateral relations with that country along with the necessary institutional back-up. India initially opened a cultural centre and a visa office. India correctly anticipated the emergence of a democratic political government in South Africa and prepared the ground for a meaningful relationship with that country.

Rao succeeded in galvanising cooperation in the SAARC organisation, the "South Asia preferential trade arrangement" (SAPTA) and expanded cooperation in the fields of technology, agriculture and information was brought about during his tenure. Similarly, India consolidated its institutional relationship with ASEAN by becoming a partial dialogue partner with this South-East Asian group in 1993-94.

It was during the period 1991 to 1994 that New Delhi and Beijing took positive steps to move forward towards the solution of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute. Both India and China undertook a detailed re-examination of their respective negotiating stances on the boundary issue in the late 1950s and early 1960s and realised that both sides had congealed themselves into rigid postures which resulted in the breakdown of negotiations, ultimately leading to an avoidable military conflict with tragic consequences for Sino-Indian relations for nearly three decades. As mentioned earlier, the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping had indicated his country's willingness to resolve the boundary dispute on the basis of adjustment and accommodation. India, on its part, belatedly acknowledged the fact that the MacMahon Line (on which India had adopted an adamant stand) was not really depicted in a very accurate manner cartographically or descriptively. The fact of the matter is that MacMahon's note describing the delineation of the boundary differred from its cartographic depiction on the relevant maps. We did not acknowledge these contradictions in the earlier rounds of our negotiations in the 1950s and 1960s. India, therefore, suggested a step-by-step approach to resolve the boundary question. The first step was the stabilisation of the situation on the line of actual control and to delineate it more precisely in those sectors where differences of opinion existed between India and China. The second step was to come to a mutual agreement to maintain peace and tranquillity on the line of actual control. The third step was to put in place expanding mutual confidence-building measures which would create an atmosphere of normalcy and peace on the line of actual control,

after which both sides could proceed to address the substance of the Sino-Indian boundary question. This approach was mutually agreed upon and, after four rounds of negotiations between 1991 and 1993, a Sino-Indian Agreement to maintain peace and tranquillity on the line of actual control along with some confidence-building measures was finalised and signed when Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited Beijing in September 1993. The main impetus to the negotiations which led to this concrete result was provided by Chinese Premier Li Peng's discussions with Prime Minister Rao in New Delhi in December 1991. The signing of the agreement has brought about normalcy and an even tempo in Sino-Indian relations. Consequently, there has been a gradual expansion of economic, technological and cultural cooperation between the two countries from 1991 onwards.

On the substantive question of resolving the Sino-Indian boundary dispute, it must, however, be stated that not much progress has been made since 1993. The lack of progress can be attributed to the fact that although the Chinese have no problem with the status quo continuing, on the other hand, Indian public opinion has yet to be prepared to agree to a realistic solution. A practical approach for resolving this important problem would be to delineate the Sino-Indian boundary on the basis of recognised principles of international law, using modern cartographic techniques and taking into account the important strategic and economic interests of both China and India. This process will definitely take time, given the current political attitudes and ground realities. It should be borne in mind that the practical approaches of both Rao and Li Peng contributed significantly to setting Sino-Indian relations on the right track.

Relations with Pakistan continued to remain adversarial with no let-up in Islamabad encouraging subversive activities in Jammu and Kashmir. But Rao and Nawaz Sharif reduced tensions and brought down temperatures considerably by meeting each other six times at the summit level between 1991 and

1993. Also, Foreign Secretary level talks continued right up to January 1994 which resulted in India and Pakistan agreeing on a number of mutual confidence-building measures as far as the armed forces were concerned and gradually expanding economic relations. Communications only broke down when Benazir Bhutto came back to power and ordered the discontinuation of Foreign Secretary level talks at the end of January 1994. The Rao Government, however, succeeded in preventing bilateral tensions from degenerating into a conflict situation.

During Rao's term of office, India also managed to fashion a calibrated non-confrontationist policy in dealing with important issues such as nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament during interactions with the US and other nuclear weapons powers. Official and technical level bilateral discussions held by the Government of India with the governments of nuclear weapons countries ensured that India would retain its freedom of options on these issues while, at the same time it would define limited areas of agreement on the basis of which durable arrangements for genuine, non-discriminatory disarmament could be evolved. This effort, however, proved to be abortive because the US backed out of a series of assurances and commitments which it had given India about (1) the indefinite extension of the NPT, (2) about the CTBT (comprehensive test ban treaty), being non-discriminatory and (3) about other regimes and agreements on these issues being fashioned in a manner which would be non-discriminatory and responsive to the security interests of India. India, in response, reverted to its maximalist position on these issues by 1995 leading to a drift in discussion on these matters which continues till now.

In overall terms, Narasimha Rao's stewardship of India's foreign policy in a period of volatile transitions in world affairs would be judged as adroit and successful.

H.D. Deve Gowda succeeded Rao as Prime Minister after the general elections of mid-1996. (Gowda was heading a United

Front coalition government at the Centre.) I.K. Gujral again became Foreign Minister. He basically continued the earlier orientations of Narasimha Rao's policies but his optimism embodied in the "Gujral doctrine" about unilateral goodwill and generosity was not likely to bring about the desired results in the long run as events between 1996 and 1997 showed. Having said this, it has to be acknowledged that Gujral's foreign policy had cosmetically improved the regional political atmosphere and improved India's relations with all its neighbours in general terms.

It was Gujral again, who, in late 1996, firmly opposed the CTBT because of its discriminatory provisions. Such a stand ensured that India could meet its national security concerns. The same approach has been adopted by him in dealing with the fissile material cut-off treaty.

(In April 1997, the Deve Gowda Government lost a vote of confidence in Parliament. After that I.K. Gujral became the Prime Minister.) It appeared that by the summer of 1997, the Gujral Government had came to the conclusion that a confrontationist approach of negativism may isolate India on disarmament and related issues. India seems to have shifted gears to become more realistic in its approach, which was both appropriate and desirable. During his meetings with President Bill Clinton in New York in September 1997, Prime Minister Gujral agreed to reopen official and technical level discussions on disarmament issues with the US.

India's relations with Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan still remain subject to negative undercurrents, despite the Gujral Government signing a 30-year Water-Sharing Treaty with Bangladesh and signing agreements for hydroelectric power projects such as the Mahakali project with Nepal. It should be pointed out that the emotional and psychological apprehensions of Bangladesh and Nepal have prevented these two countries from responding meaningfully to the initiatives taken by the Gujral Government. A gradual approach on our part could have been advisable with respect to several sticky issues.

Nepal's desire that India should revise the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950 to meet its (Nepal's) concerns should be acceded to. There is no point in insisting on the continuation of agreements of this type which were relevant to circumstances as they existed some four decades ago. India should have both the vision and self-confidence to be innovative in its responses to the concerns of its smaller neighbours without compromising on its own interests in terms of security, territorial integrity and economic well-being.

It would be pertinent to undertake a panoramic review of the broad trends in international relations during 1991-97. Such a review would provide some basis for assessing the main issues on which India's foreign policy should focus on the threshold of the twenty-first century. Let me first present a general analysis of India's foreign relations and diplomatic predicament from 1991 to 1997. This was the period during which we were coping with new and volatile trends in international politics whose repercussions could be felt well into the first decade of the twenty-first century.

With the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the world, for the time being, has become unipolar in military terms, with the US becoming the power centre, but in technological terms and in terms of natural resources and demography, the world has become multipolar where new equilibria between the emerging power centres of Western Europe, the United States, Russia, Japan and China have not yet stabilised.

Issues which dominated international relations during the Cold War period, such as colonialism and imperialism, the ideological struggle between the communist and non-communist states, the economic issues affecting interaction between the industrially advanced countries and the poorer developing countries, have been replaced by concerns about human rights, disarmament and arms control, good governance, management of the global environment and the structuring of a globalised economic order ruled by free market economy principles.

Geopolitical and economic regionalism and regional groupings have replaced the old transregional and transcontinental multilateral fora such as the Non-aligned Movement, the UNCTAD and the G-77 which represented the interests of developing countries.

The United Nations, unburdened by the pressures of the Cold War, has been subject to new pressures generated by the industrialised advanced Western democracies trying to dominate its activities and to shape the organisation's future role.

Other crucial challenges faced by the international community include the population explosion, competition to control vital natural resources in different parts of the world, the problems of migration, drug trafficking and international terrorism. Apart from these challenges, the rise of ethnic and religious subnationalisms is generating centrifugal forces against the existing pluralistic national state structure.

The information and technological revolutions and the globalisation of the world economy have been eroding the territorial compartmentalisation of societies as nation-states. Heightened levels of political consciousness and orientations towards democracy in civil societies has been diminishing the traditional concepts of state sovereignty and its application by governments.

The difficult task of meeting the requirements of distributive justice while fashioning effective policies required to adjust to free market commitments poses a dilemma for developing countries such as India. These are the macro-level trends which India is dealing with during the last decade of this century.

According to Jean Marie Guehenno, a senior French diplomat (in *La Fin de la Democratie*, a crisp monograph on the future of international relations), "nation-states" are becoming irrelevant. A new imperial age is in the making, where power and influence will accrue to entities and communities with advanced technologies and information capabilities. Amorphous and expansive, these entities and communities will transcend existing geopolitical boundaries and, regardless of their size and

strength, existing nation-states will have to cope with this transition. *End of the Nation-State*, the English translation of Guehenno's work, published in the US in the autumn of 1995, provides a relevant framework for assessing India's interaction with the world at large at the fag end of the twentieth century.

Guehenno's socio-political "astrology" has been fairly accurate during the *fin de siècle* we are witnessing. India had to, and has, changed both the ideological and operational terms of reference of its foreign policy from 1991 onwards. Such a change was necessary not only to adjust to the post-Cold War power equations and trends of economic globalisation but also to meet the challenges of economic deprivation, terrorism, mass migration and crime — global phenomena which permeate all countries unrestrained by national boundaries or by governmental decrees.

Let me now concentrate on specific issues with regard to India in the field of foreign policy. The last few months of 1991 saw India in a bind over a number of issues. Relations with Pakistan showed a rising curve of hostility and Bangladesh accentuated tension by deciding to internationalise the Ganga water issue. We continued to face the impact of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. In Nepal instability and domestic political strife led to the revival of anti-India phobias. The US and other advanced countries stepped up pressure on New Delhi to toe their line on items such as (1) the speed of our liberalisation plans, (2) the new (and discriminatory) regimes being initiated on transfer and development of high advanced technology and (3) nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. Internal turbulence in, and uncertain foreign policies of, countries such as China and Russia engendered difficulties in our relations with them. Though there were no overt threats to our territorial integrity and security, covert threats persisted through violent, secessionist subversion in Kashmir and the North-Eastern states.

At the same time, the momentum of the economic aspects of our foreign policy slowed down due to electoral politics and the populist tactics of political parties. This development, in turn, adversely affected the credibility of our economic reforms.

Though the World Trade Organisation came into existence early in 1995, protectionist stipulations put forth by advanced countries, under the pretext of social and human considerations, made a negative impact on India's trading potentialities. Multilateral fora such as the Non-aligned Movement and G-15 became progressively irrelevant in countering such trends.

Developments in West Asia, Bosnia, Central Asia, East Europe and Russia drew increasing international political attention, proportionately marginalising India as an area of interest.

Such was the background against which Prime Minister Narasimha Rao had to work out his government's foreign policy and its priorities during the final phase of his tenure. The main concerns and the consequent objectives were obvious. We had to effectively counter the entire range of political, military and paramilitary subversive activities threatening India's unity and territorial integrity. The pressures exerted by the superpowers and by international political entities on New Delhi to compromise on these issues had to be firmly resisted. We had to nurture and sustain our environment. We had to ensure our freedom of options with regard to defence preparedness, nuclear and space technology and also to safeguard our potentialities for technological self-reliance and growth. Our international economic credibility and external fiscal rating had to be maintained, while, at the same time, the government had to fulfil the imperative requirement of distributive justice at home.

On balance, my assessment is that we safeguarded our unity and territorial integrity despite all threats. But we have managed to deal only with the external dimensions of the problem, while internal turmoils and contradictions, which external forces are taking advantage of, remain unresolved. Our economic credibility has plummeted because of the ambiguities which have characterised our internal economic decision-making process and the manner in which they affected foreign investment and other major projects in India. Despite a measure of continuity in our economic reforms and the restructuring carried out, economic performancce has fallen short of our own expectations.

On the nuclear weapons front, the indefinite extension of the biased non-proliferation treaty (NPT) by the Western powers created a setback but we did not succumb to the pressure generated by the event. The interim tactical measures taken during 1991-95 to safeguard our nuclear and space technology development options ensured the necessary flexibility to fashion firm stances against superpower hegemony. Media reports in the US claiming that India was in the process of carrying out a major nuclear test in the autumn of 1995 and subsequent official comments confirm my assessment. We also reverted to some of our negative stances on issues such as the comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT), fissile material cut-off and the missile technology control regime (MTCR) with adroitness though such a move increased our isolation. However, all three Prime Ministers, Rao, Gowda and Gujral, remained ambiguous with regard to developing the options we possessed, which was not a judicious stand. This is because we will not be able to exercise these options due to the fact that further restrictive regimes would be imposed and provisions for punitive action against non-conforming states likely to be put in place by the end of the century.

Ties with all our neighbours improved due to initiatives taken by Rao and Gujral since 1991, but they remained subject to potential tension. Pakistan falls into a comparatively hopeless category. Also, initiatives to resolve outstanding issues with Bangladesh and Nepal remain tenuous and half-hearted. We have stabilised relations with Sri Lanka, but if the ethnic conflict in that island-nation were to continue, it could get us reinvolved due to the compulsions of Tamilnadu politics. The conferring of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award on Aung San Suu Kyi, while laudable in moral terms, has created tension with Myanmar, which we should have avoided in our larger security and strategic interests.

While India's relations with the UK and West Europe stayed on an even keel, political uncertainties at home and our attitude towards the foreign economic investment have reduced European interest in

India. Our political relations with the US too have suffered despite the upswing in economic ties. Washington's restoration of arms supplies to Pakistan, its temporising on the Kashmir issue and its caution on technology transfers to India have continued, thereby reviving doubts and suspicions about US policies in Indian public perceptions. Our relations with Central Asia, Russia and Eastern Europe did not show any forward movement mainly because these regions were enmeshed in their own internal conflicts and also because Gujral tended to focus attention only on South Asia. As for China, a purposive solution to the substantive boundary question remains distant. Other factors, such as the turmoil in Tibet, the controversy between the Dalai Lama (who was exiled from Tibet and has been staying in India since 1959) and Beijing on the nomination of Panchen Lama and China's politico-strategic aspirations in South-East Asia, could lead to future tensions with India.

New Delhi's initiatives to expand relations with South Africa and major South American nations, primarily through visits by our President and Prime Ministers, showed a revival of Indian interest in these regions. It would be reasonable to expect more tangible economic and cultural relations with them, though, politically, the European and North American linkages of African and South American countries will result in divergences between Indian orientations and their attitudes on various issues.

Our relations with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) members and Japan have remained focussed on economic cooperation, as these countries have their own reservations about India's stand on sensitive political and security issues. Our attempts seek full partnership in the political and security arrangements being planned by these countries, like Asian Regional Forum (ARF) succeeded in 1996, though their reservations are likely to make India's role in this forum a marginal, specially with the USA and China also being part of these arrangements.

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao took part in various important multilateral summits (e.g., G-15, NAM) and also in the 50th UN General Assembly session, in 1995, where he made a sober and

realistic, though unsuccessful, attempt to reorient the roles of international bodies to meet changing world realities. We have repeatedly claimed a permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the past few years, but factors such as our refusal to sign the NPT, our basic differences on a number of global issues with the five Permanent Members of the Security Council and our marginal inputs in financing the UN render the chances slim. India assumed the chairmanship of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in early March 1995, and despite the international controversies and regional tensions, the South Asia preferential trade arrangement (SAPTA) has been put in place. Projects and programmes of cooperation have moved from the discussion stage to the implementation stage.

The period 1991-97 also witnessed the emergence of infrastructural and ideological aberrations in India's national psyche. That our foreign policy was no longer backed up by national cohesion was sharply brought out by the contradictory statements issued in the last quarter of 1995 by India's Ambassador to the US, Siddhartha Shankar Ray on the one hand, and by Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee on the other, when the Hank Brown Amendment (restoring arms supplies to Pakistan) was passed by the US Senate.

One should bear in mind the fact that foreign policy performance cannot be subject to statistical grading or academic evaluation. But looking back on what India might or might not have achieved, one can draw two conclusions: First, that our foreign policy was stuck in the doldrums of international uncertainties. Second, that while we may not have notched up any significant or spectacular policy successes, Rao managed to cope with a world in continuing ferment.

Keeping in view the record detailed above, I cannot avoid mentioning two poignant issues which have affected our international credibility, not because of any lack of capacity in rational or imaginative policy formulations but because of indecision, absence of courage of convictions and irrelevant wrangling between the Civil Service and political personalities.

These two issues are: (1) the destruction of the Babri mosque (on 6 December 1992) at Ayodhya (which inflamed passions all over India, as well as in other neighbouring Muslim countries and led to large-scale riots) and (2) Kashmir. The demolition of the Babri structure created an impression, both domestically and internationally, that the Government of India was weak and that India's credentials as a secular Republic were not substantiated by the changing political realities gripping the country.

Leaving aside the political and constitutional pros and cons of whether or not the Union Government should have intervened to prevent the destruction of the Babri mosque, I am clear in my mind that the tragedy at Ayodhya could have been avoided. From about three weeks to a month before the destruction of the Babri mosque, sufficient Central Government security personnel had been deployed within effective operational reach of this mosque. I recall telling the then Cabinet Secretary, S. Rajgopal (during two meetings of the Apex Committee of Secretaries on Security) that he should immediately advise the Home Minister (S.B. Chavan) and the Prime Minister (Narasimha Rao) on behalf of this committee to move these security forces to the actual site to prevent any untoward developments. It was my assessment, shared by my colleagues such as Home Secretary Madhav Godbole and Defence Secretary Naren Vohra that a show of sufficient governmental force, indicating determination to prevent violence and destruction in the area (in advance of the crowds coming to destroy the mosque), would have defused the situation and would have prevented the breaking down of the mosque. Rajgopal, however, due to reasons best known to him, hesitated from conveying this categorical advice to the Prime Minister and the Home Minister.

I mentioned my views on this issue to the late Dinesh Singh (the then Minister for External Affairs) who, while agreeing with me, observed that there were constitutional and political implications which had to be taken into account before any massive Central security force could be deployed in the area.

The Home Ministry perhaps could not provide consistent advice, because of constant wrangling indulged in by Minister of State for Home Affairs Rajesh Pilot against Home Minister S.B. Chavan. The sad state of affairs in the Home Ministry during that period has been described in detail by Madhav Godbole in his book *Unfinished Innings* (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1996). The consequence was the absence of decisive and timely action to prevent the tragedy at Ayodhya which has left a permanent scar on our national political psyche.

As far as dealing with the crisis in Kashmir was concerned, the situation could only be described as a tragedy bordering on a farce. The only institutions of the Government of India which have acquitted themselves with efficiency and honour with respect to the tasks allocated to them were the armed forces and the paramilitary security forces. Politically and administratively, there were personal power struggles, jockeying for position, lack of coordination and deliberate lack of communication in our functioning and policies. The ambiguous approach encouraging this trend began with V.P. Singh's advent to the Prime Ministership of India. As mentioned earlier, the panicky manner in which his government compromised with militants (in December 1989) who had kidnapped the Home Minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's daughter Rubaiya, to secure her release, stands out as an example of lack of grit. V.P. Singh then entrusted the resolving of the Kashmir tangle to George Fernandes (who was specially appointed as Minister for Kashmir Affairs) and not to his Home Minister. The trend continued during Narasimha Rao's tenure. There was a Minister of State for Home Affairs, Rajesh Pilot, constantly trying to assume the leading role in dealing with the affairs of Kashmir, deliberately ignoring his Cabinet Minister, S.B. Chavan. After Governor G.C. Saxena relinquished charge in Jammu and Kashmir, his successor, General Krishna Rao, started an entirely new ball game. It is my impression that General Rao wanted to deal with problems of Kashmir autonomously, willing to accept the authority only of the Prime Minister. He would not interact

with senior officials of the Home Ministry or intelligence departments. He would maintain minimum institutional contacts with the relevant government departments. His tenure has been characterised, till the restoration of the elected government in Kashmir, by differences of opinion with the political leadership at New Delhi and occasionally even with commanders of the Indian army and paramilitary security forces. The surprising aspect is that despite different government departments working at cross-purposes in Kashmir, we still maintain control over the situation. That this impression of mine is not speculative was proved by the fact that Rajesh Pilot's irrelevant histrionics and the controversies generated by his actions ultimately compelled Prime Minister Rao to assume direct charge of Kashmir affairs in 1995.

The foregoing trends underline the fact that policy formulations on critical issues in the Government of India are subject to political uncertainties and the intractability of personalities manning the higher positions in the power structure. This state of affairs is not unique to our country. The only precaution we must take is to ensure that we become aware of the shortcoming and remedy it to the extent possible. What then are the issues which would affect our external relations in the remaining part of the decade? What are the challenges which require appropriate responses from us?

A coalition government came into being at the Centre after the general elections in May 1996. By definition coalition governments are generally incapable of cohesive or purposive fashioning of policies or their implementation. The additional contradiction during the Deve Gowda and I.K. Gujral Governments with regard to the political predicament was the fact that the two major national parties, though individually constituting large blocks in the Parliament, were outnumbered by regional parties and groups and subgroups with ambiguous ideological affiliations. Such groupings of Parliamentarians can affect the stability of the Union Government, regardless of which of the parties is leading the coalition. It would, therefore, be

unrealistic to have expected the coalition Central Government to adopt a clear approach to issues related to foreign policy and national security, whatever claims may be put forward about the capacity of the coalition to act effectively on minimum agreed programmes and policies. In any case, foreign policy and national security issues were not the focus of attention of the manifestoes of our political parties or of their election campaigns in 1996. Despite anticipating the elections for a period of nearly eight months to one year, none of the political parties really worked on presenting a well-thought-out set of policies and programmes to the people. The shortcoming was specially reflected in the election manifestoes. The Congress advocated status quo by merely reiterating that the policies which the Narasimha Rao Government had introduced in 1991 would be continued. Even the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which had something specific to propose in the sphere of defence preparedness did not enlighten the public on the time frame in which it would implement its declared intentions regarding acquiring nuclear weapons and going in for missile deployment. Nor did its manifesto mention anything about how a BJP Government coming to power would tackle the international fallout on India if its policies were implemented. Stabilising ourselves internally and sustaining our economy are undoubtedly matters of high priority. Even the endeavour to attain these objectives would involve our having to tackle a number of critical developments and our having to fashion policies responsive to the evolving events and trends in our immediate neighbourhood and in the world at large.

All our political parties had stated that establishing (or maintaining) good and stable relations with our neighbours was our foreign policy objective. All of them had also affirmed their commitment to endow our country with adequate defence capacities to safeguard our unity and territorial integrity. These objectives were empirical in nature and were (and are) the abiding norms of our foreign policy. They could not be fulfilled in a vacuum. The government would have had to work

strenuously towards fulfilling these declared objectives. These objectives had to be worked out in the context of the emerging South Asian regional environment and the resulting political pressures and trends. The three relatively larger neighbours of ours (out of the six) were (and are) subject to domestic controversies and tensions. Bangladesh had gone through volatile elections (in 1996). Resisting Indian domination was projected as a critical issue in these elections by all political parties. This phobia remains a factor in Indo-Bangladesh relations.

While Gujral forged a solution to the vexatious issue of sharing of water resources, illegal migration of Bangladeshis into India and structuring trade and transit arrangements with Bangladesh, which would help in orienting Indo-Bangladesh relations on positive lines, remain unresolved problems.

Pakistan has remained and will remain antagonistic and intrusive *vis-à-vis* India, despite the interlude of the "Gujral doctrine" and the restoration of the cosmetic dialogue between the two countries. What is more important is the fact that the Pakistani power structure expected the Gowda and Gujral Governments in India to be vunerable and indecisive. Such an expectation augmented adventurist trends in Pakistan's India policies. This was illustrated in Pakistan trying to sabotage the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir in 1996. Pakistan-sponsored intrusive violence and terrorism in that state continues to generate instability and disaffection there as well as in other parts of India, taking advantage of the frustration and alienation in different sections of our citizenry. The Pakistani leadership will encourage controversies between India and its other neighbours. Pakistan will increase its anti-India publicity and diplomatic activities around the world. Over and above all, Pakistan poses a potential nuclear military threat to India. The reaction of the United States and all important countries to Pakistan's aggressive nuclear policies and postures indicate that they were not inclined or they were unable to temper this orientation in Pakistan's strategic postures in the region.

Though the Sri Lankan armed forces were relatively successful in the campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eeelam (LTTE), the ethnic civil war in that country will continue. Reports from Sri Lanka after the 1996 general elections in India indicated that the DMK's victory in Tamilnadu state elections (held simultaneously) generated apprehensions in the Sri Lankan Government that the new state government would revive active support to the LTTE. The Tamilnadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi's statement, immediately after assuming charge, calling for a political solution to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka and cessation of military operations against the LTTE, heightened these apprehensions. The Sri Lankan Government's apprehension about possible support to the LTTE from India could lead to a repetition of the strategic and security moves undertaken by the Jayawardene Government in the 1980s to establish closer defence cooperation and security relations with countries such as Pakistan and the USA. Such a phenomenon would transform the strategic environment in the South Asian region.

Controversies between Nepal and Bhutan regarding the displaced Nepalese population from Bhutan have remained (and will remain) an important factor in our relations with both countries. This factor is apart from the task of sustaining normal relations with Nepal and Bhutan and expanding mutually beneficial economic relations, keeping in mind the sensitivities of both these countries in this context.

India's relations with China had reached a plateau after the momentum in positive relations which characterised our interaction from 1988 to 1989 and then again from 1991 to 1993. Though the Sino-Indian Joint Working Group and the experts group working on the implementation of the Sino-Indian Agreement on the line of control continued to function, no serious discussions had taken place to move forward beyond the objectives of that agreement in order to deal with the actual substance of the boundary issue. It should be noted that after the boundary agreements signed between China, Russia, Kazakhistan and Tadjikistan, the Sino-Indian boundary remains

the only unresolved boundary dispute. The choice is between inactivity and purposive effort on the basis of the agreement reached in 1993. This is an issue which, while being shelved for some time, should not be allowed to remain unresolved for long. Given China's anxieties about Tibet, we have to explore possibilities of resolving once and for all the substance of the boundary dispute.

Our relations with the United States are inextricably linked with that country's global objectives related to nuclear non-proliferation, missile development, comprehensive test ban arrangements, transfer of sophisticated technologies and the structuring of new agreements for the management of international trade and the environment. While Indo-US relations have improved in content and atmospherics, there are differences between India and the USA on the aforementioned issues. Managing these differences in a manner which will not affect our political security and economic interests would be a significant task for our foreign policy-makers in the remaining part of this century.

The manner in which Indo-US relations are managed will affect our relations with Western Europe, Japan and the countries of the Asia Pacific region in all the three vital spheres of foreign policy, namely, political, economic and national security. Discussions on the expansion of the UN Security Council and on reform of the United Nations are at a crucial stage. The Committee on Disarmament will again be in session to push forward the finalisation of the fissile material cut-off treaty and other related regimes about enforcing safeguards on transfer of nuclear and missile technologies. Each of these issues calls for concentrated thought and well-informed planning.

Sustaining our relations with Russia, the East European countries, South Africa and Israel is now subject to the complexities of the respective orientations in their foreign policies and also to those of the internal political divisions and violent internal and external pressures to which these countries could be subject. Balancing our relations with Israel and those with the

Arab countries, safeguarding the interests of the people of Indian origin in South Africa without losing the goodwill of Nelson Mandela's Government and ensuring our interests in Iran and Afghanistan are all sensitive exercises in foreign policy which our government will have to undertake.

The direction that the Central Government will give to our economic modernisation and liberalisation programmes will determine the reaction of those foreign countries which have shown an active interest in cooperation with India in the economic and technological spheres since 1991. The contradictory signals that go out from India on our economic policies have to be redressed to ensure that the modernisation and the productivity of the Indian economy do not suffer a setback. At the same time, requirements of distributive justice in a poor country like India cannot be compromised. Reconciliation of the contradictory demands of these two objectives presents a complicated task for those responsible for shaping our foreign economic policies.

The most important task of any new government would be to educate Indian public opinion and create a national consensus on all the aforementioned issues. This step would ensure that the policies which the government fashions are backed up by Indian public opinion, to the extent possible, without inner contradictions. While the last three years (i.e., from November 1995 onwards) have compelled us to look inward because of the compulsions of internal political uncertainties, it is now time to remember that we are not an island; the rest of the world remains too much with us.

A few days before the 1996 general elections, I happened to listen to a television interview in which former Prime Minister V.P. Singh, while answering a question about the political challenge that our country was likely to face, stated that nowadays it was not the "politics of choice" but the "politics of compulsions". This is the banal pretending to be conceptually profound! All political situations, at given points of time, are permeated by contemporary compulsions. The concept of choice

and compulsion can never be juxtaposed as alternatives. The crux of the matter is that compulsions of one kind or the other are abiding. The processes of policy formulations are equally perennial endeavours in deciding on choices and choosing options to respond to these compulsions in a manner which would ensure the well-being of our people domestically and externally. Choices are not available in a vacuum. The options available are themselves germinated by compulsions which could be social, economic, technological, political or cultural. These compulsions cloud the horizon of policy-making as much as they affect the country's political predicament.

An analysis of the "Gujral doctrine" would be relevant here. It is over a year now since the "Gujral doctrine" reoriented India's policies towards its neighbourhood. This doctrine certainly improved the general political atmosphere in the South Asian region. Gujral revived the bilateral dialogue with Pakistan after a gap of nearly three and half years. Apart from establishing personal contacts with the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, the institutional negotiations between the Foreign Secretaries were revived. Gujral unilaterally liberalised visa policies for Pakistani visitors and extended MFN (most favoured nation) treatment to Pakistani imports. He ordered the free flow of books and publications and revival of cultural exchanges. He indicated India's willingness to discuss the Kashmir issue without procedural conditionalities.

In a significant and bold initiative on Indo-Bangladesh relations, Gujral was instrumental in setting in motion the process which led to the signing of a water-sharing agreement with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed for a period of 30 years without demanding reciprocity on other issues such as transit facilities to the North East or illegal deportation of Bangladeshi immigrants.

Bangladesh agreed to give increasing transit facilities through its territory, and has assured New Delhi that it will not give sanctuary to Indian secessionists. India has also indicated a willingness to consider giving additional transit facilities to Bangladesh for trade with Nepal and Bhutan.

There have been positive developments up to a point in Indo-Nepalese relations. The Mahakali Agreement was ratified by Gujral. We have undertaken steps to be responsive to Nepal's foreign trade interests. Most importantly, Gujral responded to the Nepalese demand that the Indo-Nepalese Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 should be renegotiated and revised. It can be presumed that Nepal has reservations about Articles 2, 6 and 7 of this treaty. Article 2 stipulates that the Governments of India and Nepal should keep each other informed of any serious friction or misunderstanding with any other neighbouring state. Articles 6 and 7 stipulate that the Nepalese and Indian nations would be given the same privileges for economic activity, employment, resident and ownership of property in each other's territory.

The first round of discussions to review this treaty was held between the Foreign Secretaries of Nepal and India in New Delhi in August 1997. A resultant positive feeling about India in Nepal found reflection in the fact that the king and queen of Nepal attended the 50th independence anniversary reception given by the Indian Ambassador in Kathmandu.

During his visit to Sri Lanka early in 1997, Gujral gave categorical assurances that India would never interfere in that country's internal affairs. Assurances of increased economic assistance and bilateral cooperation were conveyed to Bhutan and the Maldives. In the extended neighbourhood, Gujral increased contacts with ASEAN leaders and it was during his tenure that India started participating as a full dialogue partner and as a member of the Asian Regional Forum security arrangement.

Only Sino-Indian relations were characterised by a drift, but such a drift was unavoidable because of the complexity of the boundary issues and because of differing priorities in the Indian and Chinese foreign policies. This was why Chinese President Ziang Zemin's visit to India in November 1996 did not lead to any significant political outcome.

While the atmospherics of India's regional relations have shown improvement, it is time to examine whether these recent

orientations have resulted in any significantly positive gestures, even cosmetic, from our neighbours. Secondly, has the unilateral reasonableness of Gujral thawed the attitudes and negotiating positions of our neighbours on more substantive issues?

In Pakistan's case, despite the "Gujral doctrine", one could not discern any "unfreezing" and not just on Kashmir. Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan and Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz are on record (in mid-August 1997) as saying that any substantive expansion of economic, commercial or technological cooperation was conditional to India's compromising on Jammu and Kashmir. This statement was made at a point of time when Gujral had given indications to Pakistan that India would not only like to revive the Indo-Pakistan Joint Commission but would also like to expand bilateral trade and buy power from Pakistan. Aziz went on to state that even economic cooperation within the SAARC framework would be dependent on a forward movement on Kashmir from the Pakistani point of view. Meanwhile, there was a dangerous increase in military skirmishes along the line of actual control. And Pakistan continued to give operational support to separatist militants, mainly in Kashmir.

Similarly, apart from the tentative decision on transit facilities, there were no signals from Bangladesh on a willingness to solve the illegal immigrants issue. Even the water-sharing agreement ran into difficulties early in 1997 due to the shortfall in water flows at Farakka Barrage. Instead of strictly following the sharing arrangements during a shortfall, Bangladesh insisted on its full share. Moreover, there has been no change in Bangladesh's stand on Kashmir and Dhaka still issues passports to ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam) militants.

As far as Nepal is concerned, there are still reservations about the Mahakali project. More importantly, during the bilateral talks in New Delhi in 1997, Nepalese Foreign Secretary Gwayali stuck to his country's claim to the Kalapani area, stating that the 1815 Treaty of Sugauli, between the British India and Nepal (by which this territory was ceded to India), should be cancelled. If India concedes this claim, it would lose Kalapani and its

jurisdiction over the Lipulekh pass, the strategically important route to Tibet and Kailash Mansarovar. Nor has there been any vigorous action by Nepal to contain Pakistan's ISI activities.

ULFA and Bodo separatists have remained active in Bhutanese territory. While relations with ASEAN members have been maintained at the formal governmental level, shifting policy decisions by India on a number of investment and economic projects from ASEAN have affected the content and momentum of India-ASEAN relations. There have been indications that the unilateral positivism in India's foreign policy would result in its neighbours being fully supportive of its stand on non-proliferation and disarmament issues or of India's candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

The crucial question then was whether Prime Minister Gujral's initiatives were likely to serve India's substantive political and security interests? While India may not have insisted on reciprocity it stands to reason that it should expect some positive responses and ensure that it was not taken for granted.

The SAARC summit conferences go on taking place; it would be pertinent to examine how the Gujral doctrine impacted on the multilateral discussions at Male (in Maldives) in April 1997. The main focus of attention at the summit was on economic, socio-cultural and technological cooperation. The second point of multilateral interest was the reactions of three out of seven members to the fledgling project of subregional cooperation among India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal mooted by Gujral. The most important items were the bilateral meetings which Gujral held with Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed.

By sending the Union Commerce Minister to lead the Indian delegation at the Foreign Ministers' meeting preparing for the Male summit, Gujral indicated his desire to galvanise SAPTA (South Asian preferential trade arrangement). The message was that India would be willing to expand trade concessions to make SAPTA a success and, if possible, to move towards a South Asian common market. While none of the participants opposed

this move, their reaction was not as enthusiastic as India's; their emphasis was on gradualness.

Decisions on other categories signified only moderate progress. The claim made by Gujral late in 1996, after the SAARC Foreign Ministers' Conference, that for the first time, his unilateral overtures had isolated Pakistan, was not borne out at the Male summit. The political reality is that Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, in their own interest, would not like to be seen as full supporters of Indian regional diplomatic initiatives. This reality found further corroboration in the reaction not just of Pakistan but of Sri Lanka and Maldives also about the embryonic beginnings of subregional cooperation. Both Nawaz Sharif and Gohar Ayub Khan emphasised that such cooperation would erode SAARC cohesion. While Sri Lanka and Maldives were less articulate till recently, they clearly shared the doubts of Pakistan. Four out of the seven countries moving away from an integrated approach to regional cooperation certainly affected the credibility of SAARC.

The idea of subregional cooperation is not new. A similar suggestion was mooted in 1993 in the context of Pakistan's continuing resistance to SAPTA. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Commerce Minister P. Chidambaram, keeping in mind the requirement of consolidating SAARC cooperation, rightly set aside this quick-fix solution to overcome Pakistani non-cooperation. Deliberations on the subject at the Male summit should make India reconsider its position.

Discussions with Sheikh Hasina Wajed did not result in any substantive solution to the difficulties over Ganga water sharing.

The meeting between Gujral and Nawaz Sharif certainly had positive atmospherics. This was the first meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan after Narasimha Rao had met Nawaz Sharif in Dhaka in April 1993. Given the inability of both Prime Ministers to undertake radically new initiatives on Kashmir, one could not observe any substantive progress on bilateral issues.

So the claim that the Gujral doctrine would break the logjam affecting India's relations with its neighbours was not likely to be fulfilled. The results, unfortunately, were merely cosmetic. It would be pertinent to examine the doctrine in terms of its political ingredients. Based on Prime Minister Gujral's own articulations, they seem to be the following: (a) India will structure its attitude towards its neighbours acknowledging its greater strengths. (b) Because we were larger and stronger, we shall be accommodating and generous towards our neighbours, unilaterally, to the maximum extent possible without any demand of reciporocity. (c) The goodwill generated by this approach would ultimately create a positive atmosphere. (d) Meaningful and imaginative foreign policy could not be made by the Minister of External Affairs and the professional Foreign Service, but by contributions from intellectuals, journalists and so on. (e) India would react to developments in its neighbourhood from moral high ground. These constituent elements seemed plausible. But how far would they really serve India's national interests? That we will structure our regional policies acknowledging asymmetry smacked of irrational optimism. Our acknowledging it and then becoming compromising implied that we were on the defensive about our size and our geostrategic and economic strengths. This defensive posture was detrimental to our long-term interests. We must certainly be generous and accommodating in regard to the reasonable concerns and reasonable demands of our neighbours, but to be compromising to get good conduct certificates from them would reduce foreign policy to a public relations exercise.

The second expectation that this unilateral goodwill would attract positive responses was only marginally true. There was no likelihood of any of our neighbours being unilaterally accommodating towards our concerns at the cost of their own perceived interests. The role of our professional Foreign Service with 50 years of experience behind it and the role of Parliament and its committees on foreign policy cannot be substituted by inputs from intellectuals and media experts, however knowledgeable and brilliant they may be. The downgrading of

the institutions responsible for making foreign policy by Gujral may have pleased academics and media persons, but it will certainly affect the moral and functional credibility of these institutions.

Foreign policy formulation has to be a participatory exercise by governmental, executive and legislative agencies as well as by the media and academia. The compartmentalisation of inputs and grading inputs from some segments of society as higher than others will only generate fragmentation of ideas and lead to confusion.

It should also be noted that every one of the foreign policy successes which the United Front Government and Gujral had claimed were only fructifications of initiatives which commenced during Rajiv Gandhi's time and became operational during Narasimha Rao's tenure. Whether it was relations with Nepal, the series of dialogues with Pakistan, formalising linkages with ASEAN, better Sino-Indian relations, restoring relations with the Russian Federation after the break-up of the Soviet Union or calibrating our relations with the United States, basic orientations of Indian foreign policy preceded the advent of the Gujral doctrine. The only additional dimension added by Gujral was unilateral compromise. Such a compromise, carefully selected to nurture India's security and political and economic interests were desirable, but a compromising approach based on abstractions of goodwill and ambitions of acquiring a positive image did not and do not serve India's interests.

9

Kashmir: The Unresolved Problem

The remaining portion of this book, beginning with this chapter, will deal with some of the general issues which have been of abiding importance in India's foreign policy. The first among them is Kashmir. Certain basic facts about Kashmir which underpin India's policy towards that state should be taken note of. They are as follows: (1) The state of Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India under the provisions of the India Independence Act passed by the British Parliament in 1947. (2) Indian leaders had suggested both to the British Government and to Mohammed Ali Jinnah (the first Governor-General of Pakistan) that the Princely States of India should decide their future status on the basis of the desire of the people of each of these states and not on the basis of the inclinations of the nawabs, the nizams and the maharajas. (It was Jinnah, generally supported by the British, who insisted that it was not the people but the princes who should decide on the future of their states.) Jinnah's fond hope was that the rulers of states such as Bhopal, Hyderabad and Junagadh and the Princely States of Rajasthan (all with Muslim-majority populations), the last-mentioned

bordering the proposed nation of Pakistan, would either opt for independence or accede to the new nation (i.e., Pakistan) on generous terms to be offered by its leaders. His assessment was that if the Princely States were to remain independent or accede to Pakistan, this development would reduce the territorial size of India and would also make it a geographically fragmented political entity. (3) Jinnah also hoped that the state of Kashmir, specially with the Muslim majority in the Valley, would rise against Maharaja Hari Singh and Kashmir would emerge as an independent entity or accede to Pakistan. (4) When Jinnah's hopes did not materialise, Pakistan engineered a tribal invasion of Jammu and Kashmir in October 1947; when this invasion began to flounder, Pakistan backed it up by direct military intervention. (5) India successfully managed to neutralise this aggression. (6) It was India which went to the United Nations in 1948 hoping that the international body would make Pakistan vacate the territory occupied by it and make it desist from disrupting the constitutionally valid decision taken by the Maharaja of Kashmir to accede to India. (7) India agreed to a plebiscite subject to certain very specific conditions, the most important of which was that Pakistan should withdraw all its troops and vacate the entire territory of the former Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir, which Pakistan refused to do (and still refuses to do). (8) It was against this background that India initiated democratic processes in Jammu and Kashmir and, at the same time, rejected any further role for the United Nations or any external party in resolving the dispute. (9) India had time and again objected to Pakistan agitating the Kashmir issue as an "unfinished task of the partition". (10) Failing to acquire Kashmir by subversion and international pressure, Pakistan has fought three wars with India to meet this objective by military means. Pakistan was unsuccessful and continues to be unsuccessful in this adventurist endeavour. (11) Pakistan continues to insist that Kashmir is the core issue preventing the normalisation of relations with India. For India too, it is a core issue because India cannot allow any part of its territory and any of its peoples to be alienated from the Indian Republic on the basis of religious affiliations. Such an eventuality would destroy the basic terms of

reference on which independent India came into existence; the terms of reference of a pluralistic, multiethnic, multireligious, multilingual, national territorial identity. Under no circumstances can India countenance further fragmentation of the country on the basis of the so-called "two-nation theory".

The purpose of this chapter is not to analyse the Kashmir issue in historical detail (the main trends of which have been summarised in the preceding 11 points) but to primarily focus on more recent developments in Jammu and Kashmir during the last decade of the twentieth century.

The qualitative heightening of terrorism and secessionism, with the accompanying violence in Jammu and Kasnmir, supported by Pakistan since the end of 1989, was peaking towards the end of 1991. The Ministry of External Affairs basically had three tasks to perform in relation to problems resulting from the tense situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The first task was to prevent the operational or institutional internationalisation of the J&K issue which could have led again to external intervention in Kashmir; such intervention, in turn, could have led to Kashmir's separation from India. The second task was to present Indian perceptions and the Indian case on Kashmir to the international community at the bilateral level as well as in international fora, such as the United Nations, in the perspective of India's interests. The third task was to interact with the Home Ministry and the Government of J&K in order to keep the latter two informed of the international attitudes and reactions to the developing situation in Jammu and Kashmir and to get authentic information about developments there so as to reinforce the Indian case internationally. Whatever vested interests of Pakistan and some of the important global powers might have been with respect to Jammu and Kashmir, the overall attitude of the international community towards the Kashmir issue during the period 1991 to 1997 can be summed up as follows:

(1) Regardless of the historical and legal validity of India's geographical claims on Jammu and Kashmir, the world at large perceived J&K as a disputed area between India and Pakistan.

(2) The international community was not interested in the merits of India's case or even in the plight of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Its main concern was that the confrontation between India and Pakistan on Jammu and Kashmir should not degenerate into a general military conflict and, even more importantly, into a nuclear holocaust, given the nuclear weapons capacities of both countries.

(3) While most countries (barring some Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey) acknowledged Pakistan's interference in, and support to secessionist forces in, Jammu and Kashmir, they did not (and do not) accept the Indian view that the entire problem has arisen only because of Pakistan's political and material support to such forces and to foreign mercenaries. According to their perception, the agitation in Kashmir had also been sparked off due to the social and economic frustration and alienation of substantive segments of the population in the Valley. The rest of the world held the view that violation of human rights by the Indian security forces became inevitable and unavoidable in a situation where armed political agitation was sought to be suppressed by coercive methods.

(4) The USA and the Western countries were keen that India and Pakistan engage each other purposively in a dialogue to resolve the Kashmir problem. They were willing to assist in, mediate and engineer a dialogue by whatever means possible, depending on the willingness of India and Pakistan to accept any practical suggestion. This policy attitude has undergone a qualitative change since the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests of May 1998. These countries, concerned about a nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan, are now more assertive and coercive in their desire to expedite a solution to the Kashmir issue; their inclination being to persuade India to be more compromising which India cannot do.

Muslim countries, while temporising on the Kashmir issue, and taking an impartial stand at the bilateral level with India, were

collectively supportive of the Pakistani position on Jammu and Kashmir. Such support found expression in OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) resolutions, in deliberations at the UN in New York and Geneva and in the meetings of the UN Human Rights Commission.

By the end of 1992, India also faced the predicament of some mercenaries from Afghanistan, from the Gulf countries and from Africa joining terrorist and secessionist elements in Jammu and Kashmir.

An interesting shift took place in Pakistani policies on the Kashmir issue from 1991 onwards. Realising that the strategy of detaching Kashmir from India on the basis of the ethno-religious argument would not find acceptance in the international community, Pakistan advocated the separation of J&K from India on the grounds of upholding the principles of self-determination. Such separation was offered as a remedy to violations of human rights in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan claimed that the accession of the state to India had been organised by spurious means which contradicted the provisions of the political and legislative decisions which were meant to govern the determination of the people's will at the time of India's partition.

Alistair Lamb's book, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy* (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1993), and Robin Raphael's (the US Assistant Secretary of State) statements questioning the legal basis of J&K's accession to India in October 1947 supported Pakistan's standpoint. In addition to the foregoing argument, Pakistan started generating international apprehensions that if India did not compromise on Kashmir, prospects of a nuclear war between the two countries could result. The unfortunate aspect was that the US not only backed Pakistan's viewpoint but also picked up this issue to pressurise India to fall in the line with Washington's agenda on nuclear non-proliferation and missile development.

The situation was compounded by internal contradictions and diverse pulls and pressures affecting Indian policies and attitudes on the crises in Jammu and Kashmir. There was reluctance on the part of our own political leadership and establishment to face the

fact that the disturbances in Kashmir were *not entirely due to Pakistani activities* but were also due to the alienation of some segments of the J&K population. There was no consensus in Indian public opinion or in the Indian Parliament on how to deal with the dilemmas and crises in Jammu and Kashmir. There was (and there is) consensus that Jammu and Kashmir should not be allowed to break away from India under any circumstances, but there was no integrated or cohesive view on how to meet the aspirations of the people of J&K, how to assuage their feelings of alienation and what should be done to remove their frustrations and get rid of their anxieties. As mentioned earlier, during Narasimha Rao's tenure as Prime Minister, the Home Minister, S.B. Chavan, and the Minister of State for Internal Security, Rajesh Pilot, kept working at cross-purposes. The Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and the state administration were not functioning in coordination with either the security forces command or with the Home Ministry/External Affairs Ministry. While everybody paid lip service to the need for restoring the political process and acknowledged that the critical situation in Jammu and Kashmir could not be resolved by coercive force alone, no structured policy could be evolved to revive this process. Both Parliament and public opinion remained divided on tackling the Jammu and Kashmir problem at the national level. One school of thought advocated the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution (which granted certain special privileges to Kashmir) and changing the demographic composition of the population of the Valley. Another school of thought wanted greater autonomy for, and decentralisation of power in, Jammu and Kashmir.

Apart from Pakistan, other countries took full advantage of the ambiguities and limitations of New Delhi's approach to the Kashmir problem and exerted pressures on India regarding human rights, i.e., mainly to accept external assistance and mediation. There were also differing views on how to neutralise Pakistani support to secessionist and terrorist elements in Jammu and Kashmir. Some politicians, civil servants and intellectuals advocated a preventive and reactive role. However, some hawkish elements wanted to carry the conflict into Pakistan-

occupied Kashmir (POK) and, if necessary, into Pakistani territory itself to destroy the bases from where terrorist elements were being launched into India. The Ministry of External Affairs was interested in the cosmetic rather than the substantive responsibilities related to India's Kashmir policy. As mentioned earlier, one of New Delhi's main objectives was to prevent any resolution critical of India or providing for third party intervention in the dispute from being passed in international fora. Another objective of the MEA was to counter Pakistani publicity. We had to persuade various governments about the legitimacy of our stand on Jammu and Kashmir and inform them about the dangers of ethno-religious fragmentation that would affect the nations of South Asia if Kashmir were allowed to secede from India. We were to ask influential countries to persuade Pakistan to pull back from its support to terrorists and secessionist forces in J&K. One aspect of our handling of the Kashmir issue was the lack of any structured institutional mechanism to deal with the entire crisis on a continuous basis at the highest political levels. There were periodic meetings held by the Prime Minister and the Home Minister. Meetings were also held between the Government of Jammu and Kashmir and its advisers and officials of the Central Government which can only be described as event-specific and episodic. The Cabinet Secretary used to conduct weekly meetings of an Apex Committee of Secretaries, of which the Home Secretary, the Foreign Secretary and the chiefs of intelligence organisations were the members. These meetings also dealt with specific events or incidents and corresponding remedial action to be taken. There was no strategic planning or policy to resolve the internal situation in Kashmir, or to face the Pakistani challenge. There were some attempts at long-term planning and calibrated policy formulations during the period when Naresh Chandra was the Cabinet Secretary (between 1989 and 1992), but I am afraid that his two successors, S. Rajgopal and Zafar Saifullah, just could not cope with the responsibility. The situation was compounded further by J&K Governor Krishna Rao refusing to

interact with the Home Secretary or the Cabinet Secretary, and even at times with the army and intelligence chiefs, on procedural and protocol grounds. It was a bizarre situation. Nevertheless, the Ministry of External Affairs took the following steps within the specific and narrow field of its jurisdiction.

Apart from increasing the frequency, content and range of briefings to our diplomatic misions abroad, we strengthened our permanent missions to the United Nations in Geneva and New York to cope with the spurt in discussions and debates on Jammu and Kashmir. The IB (Intelligence Bureau) and the Home Ministry prepared special briefing material, including audiovisual presentations for publicity purposes. The combined recommendations of the Ministries of External Affairs, Home and Defence led to the Prime Minister (Narasimha Rao) approving of our allowing greater access to foreign political figures and agencies to Jammu and Kashmir so that they could get a first-hand impression of what was happening there and could also see for themselves the positive efforts India was making to resolve the crisis by political means. We allowed such access to Resident Ambassadors in New Delhi, to parliamentary delegations from different countries and to the International Commission of Jurists. The Home Ministry furnished detailed data and evidence on Pakistan-sponsored terrorist activities as well as reports on action taken by the Government of India to monitor and uphold human rights. Such data and evidence were transmitted to Pakistan as well as to the governments of important countries. Such a move neutralised Pakistani diplomatic and propaganda effort against us to a great extent. A conscious decision was taken to reopen contacts with the Secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Saudi Arabia in order to keep its officials briefed about developments in Jammu and Kashmir from our point of view. We also organised a continuous pattern of discussions and briefings with heads of missions of Muslim countries in New Delhi.

The Ministry of External Affairs' initiatives for publicity and transparency were resisted by the Government of Jammu and

Kashmir, by the operational levels of the Home Ministry and by the security forces. All of them felt that such exercises in liberalism would not only be exploited by the separatist forces but also that they could create an image of India being on the defensive. In overall terms, however, our openness and our willingness to face the value judgements of the world at large paid dividends. Nevertheless, there were contratemps which the MEA encountered as a result of its initiatives. There was a strong likelihood that Pakistan would sponsor a resolution reviving the UN jurisdiction over J&K and that this resolution would be passed during the General Assembly session in 1993. The External Affairs Minister, Dinesh Singh, despite his infirmities, made a special effort to canvass the support of other Foreign Ministers against the Pakistani move. I had also gone to participate in the aforementioned General Assembly session during the course of which I held individual and collective meetings with permanent representatives of the Islamic countries, the European Community and all the five permanent members of the Security Council. I also held separate discussions with permanent representatives of China and Iran; these two countries were themselves being threatened with critical resolutions about their performance in the sphere of human rights. I assured them that if they could influence Pakistan to pull back from moving its resolution against India, we, on our part, would give them reciprocal support. All this lobbying eventually resulted in the Pakistan resolution being aborted. The United Nations, however, managed to retain its toehold on the Kashmir issue due to two factors: first, the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, made a special reference to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir in his report to the General Assembly, despite our objections. Secondly, US President Bill Clinton contributed to the process by pinpointing the situation in Jammu and Kashmir as a flashpoint in South Asia which merited international monitoring. Clinton's reference to Jammu and Kashmir in the same breath as Bosnia and Somalia did not exactly help matters. This reference led to

speculation in the Ministry of External Affairs and in the Indian press that Robin Raphael was up to her usual tricks, and had slipped in the reference to Jammu and Kashmir in Clinton's speech. The other temporary problem that we faced resulted from a call made by the External Affairs Minister Dinesh Singh on Boutros Boutros Ghali in the third week of October 1993. Ghali, during the course of this conversation, said that he was quite willing to be of assistance to India and Pakistan in resolving the Kashmir issue. He went on to say that his assistance need not be construed as an intrusion by the Security Council or the United Nations. Dinesh Singh, always polite and courteous, made some general remarks thanking the Secretary-General and welcoming his good intentions. These remarks were interpreted by the Secretary-General's staff as an indication from the Government of India that Ghali could play a mediatory role in tackling the Kashmir issue.

When my senior colleagues pointed out this interpretation to Dinesh Singh, he wanted the situation to be rectified immediately. Therefore, that very afternoon a communication was sent to the Secretary-General which clarified that Dinesh Singh's remarks should not be misinterpreted or misconstrued. This communication generated some confusion which we ultimately resolved by (as far as I recall) a telephone conversation between Prime Minister Rao and the UN Secretary-General in which Rao clearly told Ghali that while the latter's goodwill and desire for normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan was appreciated, India did not envisage any mediatory or jurisdictional role by the Secretary-General or the UN in Kashmir.

Simultaneously, some important steps were taken for the establishment of the Indian Human Rights Commission and for structuring an effective brief on questions of human rights for the UN Conference on Human Rights which was to be held in Vienna in June 1993. We also established a special publicity cell which was headed by an Officer on Special Duty to project India's policies and views on Jammu and Kashmir and also to ensure promptitude in gathering information and then projecting it

in a structured and purposive form abroad. This cell functioned under the jurisdiction of the Home Ministry. In some respects a disproportionate amount of attention was given, and energy spent, by the Ministry of External Affairs to deal with the external dimensions of the Jammu and Kashmir issue. There were moments when I felt that we should concentrate on internal crisis management in Jammu and Kashmir and then proceed towards a political solution of the problem. I also felt that no harm would have come to India had we clearly told Pakistan and other countries that we did not propose to react to their publicity, diplomatic pressures or political blandishments on this issue, which, we were, in any case, claiming to be a matter of domestic jurisdiction.

Based on my experience of dealing with revived tensions in Jammu and Kashmir since 1989-90, I feel that India has to take three steps urgently to tackle the problem. First, India has to maintain its jurisdiction over Jammu and Kashmir and ensure necessary levels of law and order so that the people there can feel a sense of security against the depredations of terrorists and sècessionists. Second, India has to undertake substantive and profoundly innovative political initiatives to restore genuine democracy and set up autonomous political arrangements which would be responsive to the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Third, India should nip in the bud Pakistan-sponsored violence and terrorism by all means possible, hopefully without getting enmeshed in an open military conflict with that country. But if Pakistan crosses the thresholds of tolerance with respect to Indian security concerns, we should not be inhibited in taking decisive action.

Ever since the situation in Jammu and Kashmir became volatile, i.e., in 1989-90, a number of proposals have been put forward to resolve the problem. Detailing some of them here would be relevant:

(1) Acknowledging the current line of control in Jammu and Kashmir as the international border between India and

Pakistan, thereby stabilising the situation and then allowing normal interaction between the Kashmiris staying in what is now called POK (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) and those on the Indian side of Jammu and Kashmir. (This was the proposal which the late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto reportedly gave general assurances to fulfil during the Shimla talks in 1972.)

(2) UN resolutions should be revived leading to a plebiscite.

(3) Working out a new standstill arrangement on Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan and placing the territory of the state under some UN trusteeship mechanism to be followed a few years later by a plebiscite or referendum for ascertaining the views of the people there. A segment of the JKLF (Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front) leadership made this proposal in 1992. Two plebiscties could be held: one on the Indian side and the other in POK. The results of both plebiscites should form the basis of a solution.

(4) Both India and Pakistan should renounce their claim and jurisdiction over Jammu and Kashmir and make it an independent state.

(5) The Kashmir Valley may be ceded to Pakistan, while India retains Ladakh, Jammu and other areas.

Except for the first proposal, which matches ground realities and which safeguards the territorial integrity of both India and Pakistan, all other proposals are bound to generate opposition on one count or the other.

The strategic environment, specific to the state of Jammu and Kashmir and also to its neighbourhood, has undergone profound changes over the last three decades, particularly after the overt nuclear weaponisation of India and Pakistan. A highly disturbed, uncertain situation prevails in Afghanistan, while China continues to hold large tracts of Jammu and Kashmir territory in its possession under its boundary agreements with Pakistan signed in 1963. Presently, both Pakistan and China are well placed in the northern and north-western flanks of Jammu and

Kashmir as far as territorial control is concerned. Apart from these factors impinging on India's policies and attitudes, some other highly relevant questions arise about the aforementioned proposals barring the first one. Can Pakistan and India accept Jammu and Kashmir becoming an independent state? Can India maintain effective jurisdiction and control over Ladakh, Jammu and Punjab, if it were to accept the Valley and Muslim-majority areas acceding to Pakistan or becoming independent? Can India ensure its own internal unity on Kashmir becoming independent? Can India ensure its own internal unity in demographic, ethnic and religious terms, if any of the proposals, except the first one, were given serious consideration?

A peaceful solution to the Kashmir imbroglio which takes into account all these pros and cons is imperative. It would be rash to suggest instant solutions because there are many imponderables which affect and afflict the power structures in both India and Pakistan. But some aspects are clear. First, the issue related to Jammu and Kashmir cannot be resolved by coercive force or military means alone. Secondly, India has to look at itself in the mirror and acknowledge the frustrations and alienation of a section of its citizens who live in an area of paramount strategic and security interest to us. These frustrations have to be overcome by political means and positive responses on the basis of democratic principles. This can be done only by reviving the basis of democratic principles and the political dialogue by all available means. Perhaps a purposive beginning has been made in this regard with the elections to the Lok Sabha held in Jammu and Kashmir in May-June 1996 and the establishment of an elected government in Jammu and Kashmir with Dr. Farooq Abdullah as the Chief Minister. Thirdly, India must have the patience and grit to counter all Pakistani efforts aimed at disrupting the political processes which we want to initiate despite our own constraints and limitations.

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India and the United Nations

India is one of the few ex-colonies which had a direct linkage with the growth of multilateralism in international politics even when it was under British rule. India was a participant in the post-First World War Versailles Conference which led to the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919. India was also allowed representation on the League of Nations by the then British Government. Even as a subject country, India was committed to the cause of structuring global peace and stability through multilateral cooperation. Thus, India was one of the founding members of the United Nations at the end of the Second World War. Speaking at the UN General Assembly in Paris on 3 November 1948, Jawaharlal Nehru said: "We do not think that the problems of the world or of India can be solved by thinking in terms of aggression or war or violence. We are frail mortals, we cannot always live up to the teaching of the Great Man (Mahatma Gandhi) who led our nation to freedom. But that lesson has sunk deep into our souls and so long as we remember it, I am sure we shall be on the right path. If I may

venture to suggest to this Assembly, I think that if the essentials of that lesson are kept in mind, perhaps our approach to the problems today will be different. Perhaps the conflicts that always hang over us will appear a little less deep than they are and in fact may gradually fade away."

Nehru went on to add: "Again I should like to state at this Assembly on behalf of my people and my government that we adhere completely and absolutely to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and that we shall try to the best of our ability to work for the realisation of those principles and purposes." This approach to the United Nations remains unaltered even after the passage of nearly half a century.

Neither time nor space allows a detailed description of India's constructive and contributory role in strengthening the United Nations and in functioning as an instrumentality in achieving the ideals and objectives of the UN and its related agencies.

Major landmarks of India's involvement in United Nations' activities are many. India basically played a non-combative, yet effective, role in the UN military operations in Korea. India sent a medical battalion as part of the United Nations forces during the Korean war. Indian forces were also designated to oversee repatriation of North Korean and South Korean prisoners of war under the aegis of the UN's "Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission," of which General K.S. Thimayya from India was the Chairman. India's political credibility as an impartial and firm advocate of peace, and as a non-participant in the Cold War was so high that Indian armed forces were invited to form the major element of United Nations peace-keeping operations in Congo, Gaza, Lebanon, Cyprus and other theatres of military conflict in the Middle East where the UN was involved. India played an active role in the international conferences convened in Geneva for resolving the Indo-China crisis after the French withdrawal from the region in the mid-1950s. This process continued right up to the present decade with Indian peace-keeping forces operating in Cambodia, Mozambique, Angola,

Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi and, to some extent, in Haiti. The professional competence and impartiality of Indian commanders were acknowledged by the United Nations with some of our senior officers like General Thimayya, General Prem Chand, General Rikhye and General Satish Nambiar being chosen by the United Nations' Secretaries-General to command the UN peace-keeping forces at different points of time from the 1950s to 1992-93.

The point to be noted is that in none of the peace-keeping operations undertaken by the United Nations and in which India was involved did our forces participate in a partisan manner against any particular group of powers which had their own strategic motivations in supporting UN peace-keeping operations.

India's deep interest in the collective economic well-being of, and encouraging self-reliance amongst, the poorer of the developing countries resulted in our playing a leading role in the establishment of UNCTAD, the G-77, the ECOSOC, the UNIDO and a number of specialised agencies of the United Nations.

India was also a leading participant in United Nations' initiatives to bring about non-discriminatory, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to ensure genuine and complete disarmament. Beginning with Pandit Nehru's strong advocacy for abolishing nuclear weapons and banning of nuclear tests right up to the time-bound disarmament plan suggested by Rajiv Gandhi at the United Nations in 1988, India has tried to activate the UN to deal with this vital issue affecting world peace. That India has not fully succeeded due to the strategic motivations of the nuclear weapon powers of the world does not in any way diminish its (India's) commitment to the cause of disarmament or the role it has played in keeping international attention focussed on disarmament issues through the United Nations.

New Delhi's profound support for the role of the United Nations underpinning international peace and stability found acknowledgment in India heading important UN agencies at

different points of time during the last 50 years. Indians have headed what used to be known as ECAFE and now known as ESCAP, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the International Maritime Organisation. Eminent Indians such as P. Narasimhan, Virendra Dayal, B.R. Sen, Dr. P.S. Lokanathan, Chinmaya Garekhan and Nitin Desai have left a lasting impression on the work of the United Nations. Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit was elected President of the United Nations General Assembly in the early 1950s. India has functioned effectively as the spokesman of the Non-aligned and developing countries at the United Nations. That the impact of our advocacies has not been as meaningful as we desired is mainly because, even within the United Nations, it is power equations that really determine policies and decisions, and not the conceptual terms of reference of equality among states or meeting the collective aspirations of the majority of member-nations.

Two specific issues which were of direct interest to India and which were dealt with by the United Nations showed that, in the ultimate analysis, the UN is the creature of the five Great Powers, namely, the permanent members of the UN Security Council, rather than a representative organisation of its membership. The two issues were Pakistan's aggression in Kashmir and the East Pakistan crisis which led to the creation of Bangladesh. The United Nations reacted to these issues neither on the merit of the cases nor impartially. The United Nations disappointed India in both cases. On the issue of Kashmir, the UN acted in a partisan manner under the influence of the United States and other Western democracies, which made New Delhi reject the UN's jurisdiction and role in dealing with this issue of vital interest to India. As far as India's support to the liberation struggle of Bangladesh goes, India escaped punitive action by the UN, which was suggested by the US and some of the other Western democracies, primarily because the Soviet Union vetoed such initiatives in the Security Council and opposed similar moves in the General Assembly.

A brief reference to the impact which the seven Secretaries-General of the UN made on the organisation would be relevant.

First of all, Trygve Lie concretised the political role of the UN in dealing with potential conflicts and conflict situations, but despite his Norwegian origins, he could not free himself from his pro-Western orientations in the Cold War environment which marked his tenure. It was during his time that India took the Kashmir question to the UN. His role in transforming a legitimate complaint by India into a bilateral dispute by treating Pakistan and India as equal disputants in the UN context cannot be denied. In fact, he generated such antagonism from the socialist bloc of countries that he ultimately had to resign by the end of 1951.

The second Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjoeld, conceived policies and carried out activities more in conformity with the idealism and objectives of the UN Charter. But towards the end of his tenure, his political orientations militated against the strategic interests of the US and the West. His activating the UN as a catalyst in the processes of decolonisation and the assertive role that he envisaged for UN peace-keeping operations in conflicts generated by the Cold War such as those in Egypt and Hungary in 1956 and in Congo in 1961 led to his death under mysterious circumstances in Congo in an air crash while the duly elected leftist President of that country, Patrice Lumumba, was under siege from a Western-inspired separatist movement. There is a general consensus that the air crash was not an accident, but a successful assassination.

The third Secretary-General, U Thant, stabilised the functional and political atmosphere at the UN which was subjected to partisan political orientations of one kind or the other during the first 16 years of the UN's existence under his predecessors. He has been the only Asian Secretary-General of the UN so far. He was not a proactive Secretary-General. He successfully played an impartial and non-controversial role

despite the period 1961-71 (his tenure as Secretary-General) being marked by the intense tensions of the Cold War characterised by a heightened momentum in the nuclear arms race, the Cuban missile crisis and the near nuclear confrontation between the Soviet Union and the USA. Other flashpoints included the Vietnam war, the Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia (1968), the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 and the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971. During U Thant's tenure, the functioning of the UN stabilised, and its specialised agencies dealing with developmental, educational and cultural aspects became more effective. The UN and the Security Council had to deal with a Secretary-General who was insistent on the body being low key, impartial and reactive. It would be pertinent to point out that it was during his period that the UN activated itself on socio-economic, developmental, technological and cultural issues. When U Thant retired after a ten-year tenure, it was to be the turn of an African to succeed him. There were candidates from Tanzania and Nigeria, but they were unacceptable to the West led by the United States. Efforts made by India and other members of the Non-aligned Movement to ensure that an African got elected to the post did not succeed. The Western powers foisted the controversial Austrian, Kurt Waldheim, as the Secretary-General. In overall terms, the United Nations' role in dealing with matters of global, political and economic concerns effectively declined during Waldheim's tenure. Security issues related to disarmament, development, peace and stability became matters of bilateral equations between the Great Powers. The United Nations was reduced to playing only a marginal role. Also, the UN's role in furthering the détente between the US and the Soviet Union and the US and China was negligible. Moreover, no significant contribution to the Vietnamese peace process was made by the UN until the late 1970s. One could draw the conclusion that Waldheim was totally dominated by the Western powers during his tenure.

The next Secretary-General, Perez de Cuellar, who served till 1991, was more in the mould of U Thant, but subject to the

phenomenon of all sensitive issues being dealt with by the Great Powers directly. The Cold War was coming to an end towards the final stages of de Cuellar's tenure. The UN itself was about to undergo changes as a consequence of this profound development in international relations. The UN's role in dealing with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq war and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was secondary compared to the policies initiated by the United States to deal with these crises. Even where action was taken under the UN umbrella, its (UN's) role was cosmetic. Operational control over UN activities was in the hands of the United States and the Western democracies.

Boutros Boutros Ghali of Egypt succeeded de Cuellar. Though chosen by the Western powers for the post, he not only desired that the United Nations play an active role on global issues and in critical situations, but he also wanted that the UN play an independent and proactive role to avoid the impact of the strategic objectives of the United States in the UN's activities. He was repeatedly critical of the United States over nuclear issues or the USA hijacking the UN's role in different parts of the world. He was also of the view that demands for reforming and restructuring of the UN should conform to the views of other members of the organisation and not just the United States and its allies. India was supportive of this approach and so were most of the developing countries, but the looming reality of international power politics manifested itself in that Ghali was not allowed the conventional second tenure as Secretary-General. He was ousted. He was succeeded by Kofi Annan from Ghana, Africa. Annan faces the tough task of ensuring the independence and impartiality of the UN, while, at the same time, avoiding confrontation and non-cooperation from the United States on matters related to finances for the UN and to the reform and restructuring of the organisation.

The most sensitive responsibility of the United Nations is its peace-keeping role. India has consistently been supportive of this role for the UN, provided its activities in this regard were (and

are) not instrumentalities of power politics of the Great Powers and provided the UN scrupulously respects the sovereignty of member-states, avoiding partisan intervention or intrusion. The abiding characteristic, however, of the UN's peace-keeping operations has been that most of them have been (and continue to be) based on the objectives of the Western powers led by the United States. This assessment remains valid if one considers vital subjects such as the suggestions for the expansion of the Security Council being discussed at the UN and the UN's peace-keeping operations in the Gulf in 1990-91 as well in Bosnia and in Somalia during the decade of the 1990s. It is equally true that the United Nations has been comparatively ineffective in furthering the causes of development and disarmament outside the framework of Great Powers' policy orientations.

It is in this overall context that we should examine, in some detail, the more recent developments related to India's involvement in the UN and connected issues from 1991 onwards.

The period 1990-91 marked a watershed in that it witnessed the transformation of the nature of the United Nations and the international environment in which it had to function. The Soviet Union was in the process of disintegration. The détente between Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union and George Bush's United States was an established reality. Given China's record of having a detached approach to UN activities and operations, except where its interests were directly affected, superpower consensus in the Security Council was becoming a progressive reality. In other words, the Security Council members were acting jointly on most of the main issues which came up for consideration at the UN. Iraq's occupation of Kuwait in 1990 transformed this evolving reality into an operational fact. Iraq's unjustified and unwise invasion of Kuwait led to the first full-scale, unanimously backed military operation by the United Nations against a member-country to counter aggression. This was the formal and cosmetic position. The Gulf War, which took place in early 1991,

embodied the following trends with respect to the United Nations which was four years away from celebrating the 50th anniversary of its establishment (in 1995).

First, the end of the Gulf War and the resulting trend of the US dominating the Security Council made it clear that the United Nations' policies and activities would be determined by the Western democracies led by the United States. Secondly, none of the permanent members of the Security Council was likely to exercise its power of veto on the council's decisions unless they affected its own specific national interests. The likelihood of the permanent members utilising a veto on issues taken cognisance of by the council for larger strategic reasons for maintaining a balance in international relations had palpably diminished. In terms of India's specific interests, we could no longer rely on Russia or any other permanent member of the Security Council to exercise the veto were the council to take decisions unacceptable to us on issues such as Kashmir, non-proliferation, security or disarmament. Thirdly, the United Nations was sought to be converted into a more active and intrusive agency for furthering the processes of the "new world order" envisaged by the US and the industrially advanced countries. Fourthly, this proactive and intrusive role sought to cover a wide range of issues of international concern and interests from human rights to environment, from women's and population issues to disarmament and transfer of technology. Fifthly, suggestions were emerging for the reorganisation of the United Nations and for reforming and restructuring its principal organs. Sixthly, the US had made it clear that it would dominate these processes of transformation of the United Nations. The US could do so because it had the general support of not only its important allies but also that of most countries of the world.

When I took over charge as India's Foreign Secretary in 1991, and read the briefing papers and policy statements prepared for our delegation to the United Nations General Assembly session that year, I discerned certain significant

political trends affecting the UN and our approach to the organisation. These trends were as follows.

The quality and the chemistry of internationalism and mutlilateralism, of which the United Nations and its agencies were institutional manifestations, had undergone a dramatic change. The role of the General Assembly stood diminished. The focus on the concerns of the developing countries was now subject to superpower interests. The disappearance of the Soviet Union and the convergence of the policies of the influential members of the UN had resulted in its becoming increasingly subject to the attitudes and interests of a small group of powerful countries, rather than those of the 180-odd members of the organisation. Both ideological and donor fatigue existed as far as the United Nations was concerned. The idealism and the faith that the UN would be a force working in the higher interests of humanity, transcending national interests and approaches, stood eroded. The UN was subject to serious resource constraints, and only selective support for certain projects and programmes by its important member-countries was provided. The disappearance of the leverages based on the Cold War and the change in power equations in the international situation subjected the UN to a lot of tension and uncertainties. The emergence of a number of regional and subregional groups compelled the United Nations to restructure its role and activities. Such restructuring became necessary to fulfil the objectives which the regional groupings had set for themselves not only in economic but also in political, technological and security matters.

Against this backdrop, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's discussions at Caracas and Harare in October and November 1991 at the G-15 meeting and the CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meet) with various heads of government clearly indicated that the advanced industrial countries desired the United Nations to play a more active role in political and security matters. These countries wanted the UN to serve as an instrument of pre-emptive action against conflict situations. They

also wanted the UN to act as an arbiter for ensuring the establishment of democracy and upholding human rights among member-states. They simultaneously wanted the United Nations to be less involved in economic, technological and developmental issues or in ensuring the interests of developing countries in the orientation towards globalisation of the world economy and universal adherence to free market economic policies by the international community. It was their view that the United Nations should not fritter away its resources and energies in dealing with these aspects of the human predicament.

An important event related to the UN, which occurred in the early 1990s, was the first-ever UN Security Council summit convened by the British Prime Minister John Major in New York on 31 January 1992. Narasimha Rao participated in this summit. India was one of the non-permanent members of the Security Council at that time. Rao's policy statement at the Security Council and also the views expressed by him during discussions with leaders of the five permanent members of the Security Council provided the terms of reference of our approach and attitudes towards the United Nations.

Prime Minister Rao pointed out that if the United Nations wanted to play an expanded and more active role in structuring a new world order, it would have to become a more representative and democratised organisation. He stressed that the changing nature and the changing role of the United Nations could not be undertaken without amending the UN Charter and without providing more region-wise representation to the developing countries in the major organs of the UN. The Government of India held the view that the interpretations of the Charter and the action taken by the Security Council must be based on the collective will of the general membership of the UN and not on the views or interests of the powerful few. Also, the UN's general role and activities must be based on general consensus. Rao went on to make a significant point that while prescribing stipulations for national or international conduct, the Security Council must accept such stipulations for itself, the

implication being that the permanent members should not prescribe for themselves a different pattern of discipline and behaviour compared to those stipulated by them for the general membership of the United Nations. We advocated the expansion of the Security Council and its permanent membership. We emphasised that such expansion was necessary to make this council more representative of the increased membership of the UN and also to ensure moral sanction to, and the political effectiveness of, the council's role and activities.

While welcoming the UN playing a more active role on issues such as human rights, environment management, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, Rao pointed out that (1) such a role should be based on the general endorsement of the membership of the organisation; (2) the terms of reference governing such activities of the UN should not be selective or discriminatory; and (3) the functions of the UN should not be influenced by the narrow interests of the more powerful countries.

Rao also anticipated that, at this session, the United Nations would be asked to take certain initiatives and adopt certain approaches on some issues that directly affected India and which would not be entirely to India's liking. Kashmir and advocacies of discriminatory non-proliferation were cases in point. This summit specifically asked the Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, to outline a framework for the UN's peace-keeping role. Ghali, with the assistance of UN Under-Secretary-General Virendra Dayal, prepared an important document known as Agenda for Peace. This document contained the prescription for enhancing the UN's role and power under Chapters 6 and 7 of the Charter. Though not articulated in so many words, the "agenda" laid more emphasis on intrusive activities by the UN under Chapter 7. In India's assessment, suggestions regarding "pre-emptive diplomacy", "preventive action" and "peace-making" instead of just "peace-keeping" were concepts which went against the original terms of reference of the UN Charter and, in many respects, contradicted the respect for member-

states' sovereignty and equality among them as stipulated in Article 2 of the Charter. Ghali's document also suggested that the UN could take unilateral coercive action against member-states, or a group of member-states, on the basis of a Security Council mandate, if the UN apprehended a threat to peace and stability. The implication was that such action should be taken without waiting for a complaint from any member-state or without an invitation from a state affected by a threat or an anticipated threat to its territorial integrity or peace in the region.

In fact, the Agenda for Peace reflected the logic underlying the UN operations in the 1991 Gulf War and the UN peace-keeping activities in the disintegrating Yugoslavia and disturbed Somalia. We had our reservations about this expanding jurisdictional role of the UN even before the Security Council, the Secretariat and other organs of the UN were reformed and restructured. At the General Assembly meetings in 1992, 1993 and 1994, we voiced this reservation and made alternative suggestions which would meet our concerns. An addendum to the Agenda for Peace was later circulated to all members, but there is still no recognition of the need for linking the UN's expanded political role with making it more representative and also making the Security Council subject to consultations with the General Assembly on vital international political issues.

Significant issues dealt with by the UN between 1991 and 1997 included the already mentioned increased peace-keeping role, human rights and the establishment of the office of a Commission for Human Rights, environment management, sustained development, non-proliferation, disarmament, reforming and restructuring of the UN, population issues and women's issues.

India took an active part in setting the agenda for the UN on the foregoing issues and in influencing projects and policies which were discussed at the United Nations itself and at the various international conferences organised by the UN.

Since space does not permit a detailed discussion of all aspects of our participation in UN deliberations, only a general survey is being attempted.

Prime Minister Rao led a high-powered delegation to the June 1992 Rio "Earth Summit". India's Minister for Environment, Kamal Nath, and Additional Secretary dealing with the conference in the Ministry of External Affairs, C.S. Dasgupta, played a very active role in the preparatory discussions and meetings and ensured that the documents and agreements which emerged from the Rio Summit safeguarded both the economic and ecological interests of the developing countries. I am constrained to say that the US President George Bush's appearance and performance at the summit were unnecessarily domineering with subtle overtones threatening the other countries of the world that if they did not fall in line with the US views on international environment management, Washington would not hesitate to coerce them to do so. India became a signatory to all the major agreements reached during the conference, including the important "Agenda 21". (This agenda laid down the basic terms of reference for ensuring the ecological, security and environment management of the entire world.)

We expressed concerns about stipulations attempted in regimes with respect to biodiversity, patents on biogenetics and for ensuring financial assistance to developing countries to acquire environment-friendly technology. It is my assessment that all our concerns were not fully assuaged though we articulated our reservations clearly and firmly.

Next we participated in the conferences on Population and Sustained Development and on Women which preceded the 50th anniversary session of the United Nations General Assembly held in September-October 1995. Preparatory work as well as internal and intergovernmental consultations for these conferences had commenced by 1992-end itself. Our specialised ministers, in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs, got involved in heightened levels of activities.

In my judgement, while we ensured the articulation of all our interests and concerns effectively in each of these conferences, our capacity to influence the outcome proved to be limited not because of any lack of logic or lack of preparation

and lobbying on our part, but basically because there was a lack of political cohesion amongst the developing countries. Nor was there any unity of approach on various important issues on the part of the developing countries. India suffered an additional setback in some of these conferences because large numbers of Indian NGOs which arrived at these conferences questioned Indian programmes, projects and policies. While the articulate presence of Indian NGOs might have increased our credibility as a vibrant democracy, it also limited our capacity to influence delegations of other countries to agree with our stances and approaches. The policies of most of the developing countries on mutlinational issues which figured on the UN agenda were influenced by their respective linkages with the important powers of North America, West Europe and the Far East. Intentions of, and emphasis in, their policies were not structured on the merits of any given issue or the collective interests of the developing countries, but on the basis of equations which affected, and pressures which impinged on, individual interests of these countries.

The expansion of the Security Council and India's interest in gaining a permanent seat on the council were matters of particular significance to us. Europe was, in any case, over-represented on the Security Council as far as permanent membership was concerned. Asia had (and has) one permanent member. The Security Council remains an institution essentially dominated by the victors of the Second World War and by the power equations which they reflect. Our advocacy for the expansion of the Security Council was on the following lines.

First, the enhanced membership of the United Nations (nearly 184 members, compared to the 46-odd members who founded the organisation at the end of the Second World War) merited the expansion of the Security Council both in the category of its permanent and non-permanent members. It was our view that the expanded Security Council should have balanced continental and regional representation taking into account demographic, economic and regional considerations. We

held the view that there should be no distinction between the former permanent members and the new ones which may enter the Security Council in terms of being endowed with the veto power. All members should have equal responsibilities and equal power. Our opinion was that the Security Council should be expanded to include 25 members with the number of permanent members being increased from five to ten. In 1992 and 1993 we decided to adopt a reticent approach with respect to our own candidature for permanent membership.

We indirectly projected our candidature by defining the criteria for permanent membership. Apart from the criteria mentioned in the earlier paragraph, we added three additional ones. A proven track record of (1) commitment to the United Nations Charter and its objectives, (2) participating in UN peace-keeping operations and UN-sponsored social and developmental activities and (3) fulfilling financial obligations to the UN every year.

While we were mobilising support for this kind of an approach, the US proceeded to announce, in mid-1993, that the Security Council expansion should be done in two stages: initially, Japan and Germany should be included as permanent members and further expansion should be organised later. There were indications that these new permanent members may not be endowed with the veto power.

During my bilateral exchanges with my counterparts in the US State Department, the British Foreign Office and the Japanese Foreign Office, hints were dropped that if New Delhi were to sign the NPT and agree to fall in line with various discriminatory regimes being put in place regarding issues such as missile development and transfer of technology and if India were to show an accommodating attitude on the Kashmir issue, India's chances of becoming a permanent member of the expanded Security Council would distinctly increase with support from important powers of the organisation. I had clear instructions to reject such overt or covert suggestions.

Our reaction to the suggestions regarding Germany and Japan joining the Security Council as permanent members in advance of the others was, logically, negative. The addition of these two members would only result in the Security Council being dominated by industrially rich and militarily powerful countries of the world and in their getting additional representation. Important countries of Asia would thus stand excluded from permanent membership of the Security Council. Both Africa and South America would have no representation whatsoever amongst the permanent members.

We forcefully articulated our rejection of piecemeal expansion of the Security Council. The curious contradiction emerged that while the general question of expanding the membership of the Security Council was discussed, the US and other permanent members expressed the view that such expansion would involve amending the United Nations Charter which was a complex and sensitive process and, therefore, we should go slow. But when they suggested the inclusion of Germany and Japan, their own argument was set aside. This was not a rational approach; but an obvious exercise in realpolitik. The matter is still hanging fire. The likelihood of India becoming a permanent member of the Security Council remains remote. My views, which I put on record before demitting office, were (and still are) as follows: (1) We should not put forward our candidature for a permanent seat in the Security Council with too much pleading or propaganda; (2) to back up our candidature we must acquire both advanced missile technology and nuclear weapons status, even if some temporary negative sanctions are imposed; (3) we must make every endeavour to bring ourselves into the first category of economically and technologically advanced countries as it is only manifest economic stability and military strength which would make our claim to the Security Council seat unchallengeable; and (4) we should firmly oppose any piecemeal or step-by-step expansion of the Security Council which places the developing countries at a disadvantage and puts on hold their full representation on the body.

India's influence on deliberations about restructuring and reforming the United Nations was acknowledged in the nomination of my predecessor in office, Muchkund Dubey, to the independent group on the future of the UN, appointed by the Secretary-General. The group was co-chaired by the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Moeen Qureshi, and the former German President, Paul Weizscaker. (The report of this group was under preparation during the last part of my tenure in office.) Two significant suggestions made by the report pertained to the expansion of the Security Council to 23 members and the bifurcation of ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) into two councils. (The suggestions are still under consideration.) My reactions to the report are that it has not touched upon organisational aspects with critical judgement and it has not taken into account political realities and motivations of the USA and other important powers which will determine the policies regarding UN reforms.

By mid-1994, the Ministry of External Affairs was engaged in intense preparations for the following events: (1) The February 1994 meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission; (2) the Copenhagen meeting on human development; (3) the international Conference on Women (which was to be held in Beijing); and (4) the 50th anniversary of the UN General Assembly summit session. (The last three were held in 1995.) We had already taken a policy decision not to participate in the UN Conference on the indefinite extension of the NPT (held in May 1995). This decision had been taken because we had received clear indications that, at this conference, the United States would bulldoze the others to ratify the indefinite extension of the NPT without any modification. We also made a correct anticipatory assessment that, despite reservations and objections to such extension on the part of many countries, none of them would be willing to take a firm stand against the moves of the United States in the matter.

So, in the ultimate analysis, despite the idealism articulated, despite the optimism generated by the end of the Cold War and

despite the expectations of a more peaceful atmosphere prevailing internationally, the United Nations still remains subject to considerations of superpower strategy and realpolitik. This is the ambience in which India will have to fashion its approach and structure its role in the UN and its allied agencies in the coming years.

Certain administrative Indo-centric aspects of our relations with the UN are worth mentioning.

First, there is constant jockeying between different ministries of the Government of India to become the nodal point of the main coordinating agency for different UN activities or regarding different UN organisations.

Secondly, the existing dispensation that while specialised ministers would interact with various specialised agencies of the UN such as UNICEF, ILO, WHO or IAEA, the overall formulation of policy and coordination of India's participation in the activities of these agencies is subject to political assessments of the Ministry of External Affairs under the guidance of the Prime Minister. While the logic of this procedure was generally accepted by my colleagues, i.e., the Secretaries in other departments, I frequently found that ministers and ministers of state were unhappy about having to abide by the advice of the MEA not because there were major differences on policies or perception of issues, but because the MEA's coordinating role imposed restrictions on foreign trips and, at times, irrelevant and frequent junkets abroad, which were desired by personages from other departments and ministries. Secondly, we faced the piquant situation of political figures on our delegations wanting to modify statements to be made in various multilateral fora according to their own predilections and their desire for publicity back home. When we pointed out that their statements were based on government briefs, finalised at the cabinet level, one faced their wrath off and on, including fulminations about violation of democracy and attempts on the part of the bureaucracy to stifle the so-called vision and creativity of some such political figures. But, on the whole, they fell in line when firmly informed that

they could depart from government briefs only after they had had a chat with senior figures in the Prime Minister's Office or with the Prime Minister himself.

The third dilemma related to the question of Indian officials desiring employment in the United Nations and its agencies. Statistically, India is one of the most over-represented countries in the UN bureaucracy in terms of the quota available to us. But the imbalance is that a large number of Indians have been directly recruited by the UN itself at the lower and middle levels. It is with great difficulty that we have managed to position Indians at senior levels in different UN organisations. Those Indians who are in the United Nations holding a lien on their jobs in the Government of India want to continue with the UN without losing their connections with the Indian Civil Service. Some of them also want to get promotion in the organisation in which they are, even if it affects the induction of other Indians into this organisation.

The fourth problem is the continuous and intense lobbying by officials of our Civil Service to get into various UN organisations. This desire for employment in the UN at times is devoid of any judgement about the responsibilities that have to be fulfilled or the nature of work that would be assigned to them. I had occasions to object to Senior Joint Secretaries and Additional Secretaries desiring to accept UN jobs at much lower levels of responsibility, even though there are clear government stipulations about what kind of posts in the UN should be filled by which kind of officers having certain degrees of seniority.

The exodus of Indian officers to the United Nations only deprives our Civil Service of competent staff. The only justification for our officers to get posted to the UN is if they can attain positions where they can influence decisions and policies of the concerned agencies in favour of developing countries and safeguard our interests. Regretfully, the levels at which our officials join and then continue do not meet this objective in a majority of cases.

Two senior level appointments of Indians in the UN system which were managed by the Ministry of External Affairs during 1991-94 were those of Chinmaya Garekhan as Under-Secretary-General to the UN for Security Council Affairs and Nitin Desai for the post of Under-Secretary-General in charge of the UN Environment Programme. Indian representation is certainly better, qualitatively and quantitatively, in the UN bureaucracy, when compared to most developing countries. But it is no way near the position that we deserve as one of the largest supportive members of the UN.

What then are the major orientations of the United Nations, which India has to cope with, in the first decades of the twenty-first century?

Firstly: the problem of UN reforms and the expansion of the Security Council, which is subject to superpower orthodoxies and the contrasting aspirations of the majority of the members of the UN.

Secondly: the UN, specially, the Security Council, becoming increasingly intrusive and proactive, not only on security issues but also on issues related to human rights, environment, social issues; the stipulation of respecting the sovereignty and domestic jurisdiction of member-states is progressively under pressure.

Thirdly: the UN's role in developmental activities and economic matters is being reduced. It is being shifted to the multilateral financial institutions like the IMF, the IBRD, and the Asian Development Bank.

Fourth: the UN tends to be used as an instrumentality to further the policy objectives of the great powers (the permanent members of the Security Council). This phenomenon has become more pronounced in the post-Cold War period.

Fifth: the role of the UN General Assembly is diminishing *vis-à-vis* the Security Council. This is an important aspect of UN reforms meriting concern and attention.

Sixth: at the half century mark of is existence the UN remains short of financial support because many member countries do not honour their financial obligations to the UN.

The UN is short of funds not only for its recurrent expenditure, but also for a member of projects and programmes, which member-countries wish it (the UN) to undertake.

Seventh: the post of the Secretary-General has become more political in terms of superpower preferences. The appointment of Kurt Waldheim as the Secretary-General in 1972 and the denial of a second term to Boutros Boutros Ghali by the USA are illustrative examples.

India has a creative and leading role to play in ensuring the democratisation of the UN and in dealing with these controversial trends affecting the functioning of the organisation, on effectiveness in this regard will depend on our networking and coordination of policies with other developing countries, aimed at generating collective and unified pressures for UN reforms on behalf of the majority of its membership.

11

Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament*

As this book in general, and this chapter in particular, present a panoramic survey of the manner in which India has dealt with issues related to its foreign policy and national security, the contents do not aim at a specialised or detailed analysis of India's policy stance over the last 50 years on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues. The objective is limited to providing a broad description of the evolution of our policies on these issues and the factors and rationale which led to certain policy orientations. The Indian leadership, over the years, has been deeply conscious of the dangers posed by nuclear armament. In a speech delivered in the Indian Constituent Assembly on 14 August 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru observed: "We hear a lot about the atom bomb and various kinds of energy that it represents...in essence today there is conflict between two things, the atom bomb and what it represents and the spirit of humanity. I hope that while India will no doubt play a great part

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* *There is an update chapter at the end of the book on the post-Pokhran test developments since 11/13 May 1998.*

in all the material spheres, she will always lay stress on the spirit of humanity." In his succinct statement Nehru articulated the basic terms of reference of India towards the issue of disarmament as well as its attitude towards nuclear technology and other advanced technologies. In a sense what he indicated was that while India would actively work on acquiring and developing advanced technologies, including nuclear technology, for productive and developmental objectives, India's commitment to humanity would result in its consciously abjuring the use of such technologies for violent or military purposes.

Elaborating on policies towards nuclear issues, and the orientations that they would take, Panditji stated in another speech in the Lok Sabha on 10 May 1954: "It is perfectly clear that atomic energy can be used for peaceful purposes to the immense advantage of humanity. It may take some years before it can be used more or less economically. I would like the House to remember that use of technology for peaceful purposes is far more important for a country like India whose power resources are limited than for a country like France, an industrially advanced country."

Nehru's own scientific temperament and his interest in higher technologies combined with the technical knowledge and operational enthusiasm of senior scientists of India, such as Homi Bhabha, Shanti Swaroop Bhatnagar and V. Krishnan, resulted in India embarking on the path of acquiring multifacted technological competence including in the field of nuclear energy and related activities. In the period between 1954 and 1963, India developed the required infrastructure, trained manpower resources and external inputs, particularly from the US, to create programmes for the peaceful uses of atomic energy. India, however, remained firmly opposed to the acquisition of nuclear arms and to nuclear weapons tests. Indian ideas articulated during debates at the United Nations resulted in the Atoms for Peace Programme initiated by the US and adoption of the partial test ban treaty in 1963. India's successful establishment and operation of the nuclear research reactor at Trombay and later

commissioning of the Tarapore atomic power plant resulted in our country being acknowledged as one of the front ranking countries in the international community in the sphere of nuclear technology and its uses. India voluntarily agreed to submit nuclear reactors which it had constructed with foreign assistance to safeguards and inspections, first bilaterally and then through the International Atomic Energy Agency.

While India showed its sense of responsibility and restraint by accepting safeguards and impartial inspections, Nehru was prescient about the possibilities of discriminatory inspection and of disarmament and technological regimes which may be put in place by nuclear weapons-possessing powers. In the same speech (of 10 May 1954), Nehru referred to the speech of US President Dwight Eisenhower in which he suggested the creation of an internationally controlled agency to oversee the nuclear activities of individual states. Eisenhower had suggested that the agency be created by the United Nations. Commenting on the proposal Nehru said: "We all agree with the proposition that there should be proper international control and proper use made of the stock of fissile material, so that all countries can use them for research work or for proper purposes; but how is this to be done, that is where the difficulty comes. President Eisenhower referred to some agency of the United Nations. That appears reasonable, but let us approach what proposals have actually been made in regard to atomic energy control by various countries. At the beginning of the year the US said that an international control agency shall be put up by the United Nations. It shall thereafter be an independent body, outside the control of the Security Council and the United Nations. The United Nations is merely supposed to set up the agency and wash its hands off it. It becomes an independent organisation. This organisation will of course have an unlimited right of inspection. Agreed. It shall have the right to maintain its own inspectors on territories of any foreign state licensed to engage in any of the processes of the production or research in atomic energy. Thus the atomic energy body becomes a super-state

maintaining its own teams or arms, whatever you like to call them." Nehru went on to evaluate the implications of the role proposed for this agency: "Then again it shall own and control — mark these words — the raw materials, the plants in which the ore is processed and all plants which deal with *reduction* of atomic energy wherever they may be situated in any country of the world. This is a very far-reaching provision. It means all of our raw materials and our mines would be owned and controlled by that independent body, which is even independent of the United Nations, after it is created. It means tremendous power being concentrated in the hands of a select body because it shall decide if, when and where and to what extent the various processes may be carried out and in which part of the world atomic energy plants may be established. And there are limitations also. According to it (the agency) shall have authority to issue and withhold licences from countries, institutions or enterprises engaged in any activities relating to the production of atomic energy." Nehru had clearly anticipated the idea of a discriminatory nuclear non-proliferation treaty, full-scope safeguards and restrictive technology regimes, which militated against the interests of the developing countries. These subjects formed the substance of the deliberations on non-proliferation and disarmament procedures which have been, and are being, progressively implemented since the 1960s till date.

India's policies on non-proliferation and disarmament issues from the 1950s right up to the present period contained the following elements:

(1) India remained firmly opposed to nuclear weaponisation and the development of weapons of mass destruction.
(2) India desired the international community to accept a time-bound programme for complete and general disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, without any discriminatory provisions.
(3) India was firm in its desire to acquire and develop nuclear technology and higher technologies for peaceful purposes,

the ultimate objective being to become self-reliant in this important sphere of productive scientific and technological activity which was of vital interest for India's development and economic well-being.

(4) India was willing to submit itself to controls, safeguards, and inspections if they were made equally applicable to all countries, regardless of their influence and power.

Nehru also anticipated that as long as China was kept out of the United Nations, it would be futile to talk about international regimes to control the spread of nuclear weapons. His anticipation that China would become a nuclear weapons power was proved to be correct. It was in 1964 that China conducted its first nuclear weapons test, though the event occurred after Nehru's passing from the scene. It would be relevant to recall that Washington, anticipating China's nuclear weaponisation, had suggested to New Delhi that in the context of India's technological and trained manpower capacities, it should become a nuclear weapons power, as a counter to Soviet capacities and Chinese potentialities. Nehru reportedly told Dr. Homi Bhabha to firmly turn down these suggestions from the United States, reiterating his deep commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Had India responded to this suggestion of the US in the late 1950s and, early 1960s, we would not have faced the problems which we did (and do) in regard to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, a draft of which was finalised in 1966 and which came into force only in 1968. Had we nuclearised ourselves in the early 1960s, we would have been treated as a nuclear weapons power in the definitional terms of reference for the NPT. Both our isolation and frustrations over the years since the adoption of NPT could have been avoided. But Panditji was a convinced idealist who did not wish to deal with international politics in terms of power equations. He wished to retain for India the high moral ground on such issues.

Reports about the US indicating to India that the latter could go ahead with its nuclear weaponisation programme (mentioned

earlier) contain one ambiguity. One version is that American nuclear scientists were asked by the US Government to convey this message to Dr. Bhabha, some time between 1962 and 1964 on the basis of Washington's anticipations that China would become a nuclear weapons power. The other version is that the US National Security Council, the State Department and the nuclear establishment seriously discussed the possibilities of encouraging India to become a nuclear weapons power. This second version finds support in the memoirs of Dean Rusk, the US Secretary of State in the early 1960s. Rusk does not clearly indicate whether the idea was dropped after internal discussions or whether it was conveyed confidentially and informally to India which, anyway, did not evoke any positive response from the Government of India.

Taking into account the nuclear weaponisation which has taken place all around India and its impact on geostrategic power equations in our region, the conclusion cannot be avoided that India's attitude to abjure nuclear weapons at that point of time affected its national security options negatively. India refused to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty because of its discriminatory provisions favouring the nuclear weapons powers and leaving them with the option of increasing their nuclear weapons capacities. India's other objection to the treaty was that its other provisions not only denied the freedom of options to non-nuclear weapons countries on armament issues, but also it imposed restrictions on non-nuclear weapons countries from acquiring advanced nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes. India was subjected to much criticism for not signing the NPT. India, however, remained constant in its opposition to the non-proliferation treaty. India also opposed the indefinite extension of this treaty in May 1995; but one is getting ahead of the story and the chronology.

To get back to the proper sequence, Mrs. Gandhi faced the challenge of expanded nuclear weapons deployment around India and the progressive nuclear weaponisation of China and Pakistan during the first phase of her tenure as Prime Minister

between 1966 and 1977. Both the United States and the Soviet Union had forces armed with nuclear weapons deployed in the Indian Ocean and the Asia Pacific region, from Hawaii to Diego Garcia. The Chinese had moved on from their conventional weapons capacities to thermonuclear weapons capacities with matching acquisition of delivery systems. Equally significantly, Pakistan had commenced its clandestine nuclear weaponisation programme immediately after its military defeat by India in 1971. India by now had expanded its research and power reactor programmes which included reactors built indigenously without any external assistance like the one at Kalpakam, near Madras. Keeping in mind the security threats being faced by India at the strategic level, Mrs. Gandhi authorised the conducting of an underground nuclear test which could justly be described as a dual purpose experiment. The explosion of the nuclear device would constitute an experimental basis for a nuclear weaponisation programme, at the same time, serving the purpose of a technology demonstration experiment for the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Dr. Homi Sethna and Dr. Raja Ramanna were senior scientists of the Indian Department of Atomic Energy who conceived and conducted the Indian nuclear test in the Pokhran desert (in Rajasthan) on 18 May 1974. India successfully managed to keep the plans for this nuclear experiment confidential till it actually took place.

There was a furore amongst the nuclear weapons powers of the West about India having conducted this experiment. As anticipated, Pakistan took full advantage of this experiment to justify its own nuclear weaponisation programme, obfuscating the fact that it had commenced its clandestine weapons programme three years earlier.

The Soviet Union, though not as vocally critical of India's nuclear test as the US was, had reservations about India acquiring nuclear capacities of this level. The Chinese, in terms of the logic of their own nuclear weaponisation policies, did not express any opinion one way or the other. It has to be acknowledged that the Indian nuclear test generated additional

threat perceptions amongst India's neighbours regarding its intentions of dominating the region.

Having confirmed our nuclear capacity to ourselves and having indicated our potentialities to the world at large, we decided to follow a policy of calibrated restraint so much so that we did not conduct any further nuclear tests for the last 24 years.* A deliberate policy of ambiguity was adopted at the operational level. According to statements made by eminent Indian scientists such as Raja Ramanna, Dr. M.R. Srinivasan and Dr. R. Chidambaram, all Chairmen of the Atomic Energy Commission, India has conducted laboratory research and technological work for enhancing its nuclear capacities. *But no tests had been undertaken.*** This ambiguity was reflected in India's foreign policy. India's international stance has been that we are a "nuclear weapons capable power". We are keeping our nuclear weapons options open for national security purposes. But for the present we wish to continue our policy of restraint and self-abnegation with respect to nuclear weaponisation. Another dimension of our nuclear policy has been (and this applies to our missile and space technology policies also) that we shall not accept any compartmentalised and discriminatory technology regimes or agreements which stand in the way of our freedom of acquiring and developing technologies for us to become self-reliant in all spheres of sophisticated technology for which we have the capacity and the potential.

Having said this, it is my considered assessment that our not following up the nuclear test of 1974 in a transparent manner to become a nuclear weapons state was again an opportunity lost to safeguard India's position in strategic global power equations. Our reticence in this regard has impacted negatively on bilateral relations which could have developed on more equitable lines

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* *It was only in May 1998 that India exploded five more nuclear devices.*

** *This matter was written before May 1998*

with China, the US and the Soviet Union (now the Russian Federation).

There were reports that despite India not having conducted nuclear tests, it had the potentiality to assemble nuclear weapons and deploy them. There were even reports that some nuclear devices had already been assembled and kept in reserve to meet critical eventualities. By 1987, there was confirmed information about Pakistan having acquired nuclear weapons capacities. In the context of continuing trends of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Rajiv Gandhi had proposed a time-bound programme for disarmament at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1988 (see Chapter 10). Drawing on India's experience on deliberations in the UN Disarmament Committees in Geneva and in New York, over the previous four decades, Rajiv Gandhi proposed a comprehensive non-discriminatory programme of disarmament. Though generally endorsed, this disarmament plan did not fit in with the agenda of the nuclear weapons powers. They continued to have their own selective, discriminatory disarmament agenda which found expression in the indefinite extension of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the final draft of the comprehensive test ban treaty and the missile technology control regime, and is likely to find further expression in the fissile material cut-off treaty which would be under discussion in 1998.

India's conceptual approach to nuclear non-proliferation governs its approach towards missile technology and other related technologies. The period from 1990 to 1997 has generated critical pressures on India, with regard to disarmament and related technological issues. The break-up of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War have enabled the United States and its allies to initiate and push through an agenda on disarmament which would ensure the long-term strategic superiority of the industrially advanced countries over the less developed countries. This agenda poses one of the most important challenges to India's foreign and national security policies. It would be relevant, therefore, to analyse in some

detail non-proliferation and disarmament during 1990-97 specially since, for the time span of two and half years, I was directly involved in discussions on this subject as Foreign Secretary. An analysis of this period would also include some flashbacks to earlier developments which impinged on more contemporary policy deliberations.

India's policies in respect of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament were subject to two types of pressure (and persuasion) by influential powers led by the United States. The first type was based on the concerns and perceptions of these powers (not ours) about the maintenance of regional security and stability. The second type was derived from their anxiety that India and Pakistan should not become capable of producing nuclear weapons or missiles. They wanted to ensure that India particularly did not acquire nuclear arsenal military missile deployment capacities.

The first type of pressure was exerted as a result of the perceived need for confidence-building measures between India and Pakistan; in other words, India should not become a threat to Pakistan in particular, and should not turn hegemonic towards other neighbouring countries in general. The second type of pressure was couched in comparatively lofty advocacies of eliminating weapons of mass destruction, moving towards nuclear non-proliferation and attaining general disarmament. In consequence, our present policies on these important and sensitive issues are in a state of flux. In fact, the main aim of this chapter is only to detail the Indian predicament in respect to these issues and the compulsions and interests resulting from them which affected our policies between 1990 and 1997, and to describe, in political terms, how our policies evolved and the rationale on which they were structured.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, India was an acknowledged nuclear weapons threshold power. This had been the situation ever since we conducted the 1974 Pokhran peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE). Though, in comparative terms, we could count ourselves among the advanced countries in the

sphere of nuclear technology and its uses, the evolution of such technology and its utilisation for peaceful purposes in many ways fell short of what we expected to achieve. Our nuclear power generation plants at Tarapore, Narora, Kota and Kalpakam suffered from technological limitations, shortage of raw material and frequent breakdowns.

The nuclear power generation plans which had been projected by Dr. Vikram Sarabhai in the 1970s had not been fulfilled. The Tarapore power reactor as well as the Rajasthan power project had been adversely affected due to the political reservations (and resentments) generated by our Pokhran experiment. This situation was compounded by our steadfast firmness in not signing the discriminatory nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Though we had refrained from conducting any nuclear device test after 1974,* we had continued our research and development work in the nuclear field as well as in the missile development field to the extent that we could, despite the restrictions and hurdles placed in our way by nuclear weapons powers. Obviously, the foreign scientific community as well as intelligence agencies were constantly monitoring our policies and programmes in these fields, especially after the Pokhran test. The bogey of India becoming a nuclear power and the threat that it could pose to regional and international security became recurring themes in the Western media as well as in technical writings in the West. An example of this exercise was the rumour spread that India and Pakistan were on the verge of a nuclear conflict in the mid-1990s, when the situation in Kashmir blew up. This rumour was sought to be given academic respectability in an utterly speculative and inaccurate analysis contained in the book *Critical Mass* written by US authors Robert Windrem and Willaim E. Burrows in 1993. Scientific and pseudo-scientific assessments were propagated that India had 10-15 nuclear bombs in its possession, that it was capable of producing between 50 and 70 nuclear

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* *India conducted nuclear tests after 24 years (i.e., in May 1998).*

devices backed by missile and other delivery systems and that its nuclear reactors were not safe.

Factors such as our dedicated efforts to make an international convention banning chemical and biological weapons a reality, our suggestions that all countries should eliminate weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons of all categories by the first decade of the twenty-first century (the proposal made by Rajiv Gandhi in 1988) and our willingness to participate in a global conference to achieve general and complete disarmament within a definite time frame on the basis of time-bound commitments by all countries without any distinction or discrimination were either ignored or considered Utopian. International political, diplomatic and technological pressures exerted on India were peaking by early 1992 in anticipation of the mid-1995 International Conference to be held to extend the NPT indefinitely.

The nuclear powers had the additional motive of stifling India's technological as well as research and development capacities in these vital spheres which constituted the cutting edge of sophisticated weapons technologies.

The specific objectives which we had to fulfil to safeguard our interests therefore were: (a) To ensure that the necessary raw materials and technologies remained available to India from various countries so that our research and development programmes and the aim of attaining self-reliance in the spheres of nuclear and missile technology did not get stifled or halted; (b) to resist increasing political pressure exerted on us in a manner wherein our scientific community members would not be isolated from their counterparts in other important countries; (c) to calibrate our reaction against pressures exerted on us in a manner wherein our defence preparedness and defence technology did not suffer abrupt setbacks; and (d) to avoid getting completely isolated as "nay-sayers" on vital issues of international concern such as nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament while countering discriminatory pressures against us. Moreover, we had to fashion the details of

our policies in such a way that the continuity in our technological cooperation with countries such as Russia, France, England, Germany and Japan did not suffer.

We had to devise tactical methods to resist the impact of different restrictive regimes on nuclear and space technology which were being put in place unilaterally by the more powerful and influential countries of the West (regimes such as the missile technology control regime or MTCR) and the "nuclear supplies club" stipulations. We also had to devise our policies to satisfy India's public opinion and the Indian Parliament which were firm in their views that, under no circumstances, should India compromise its interests in these particular spheres under any discriminatory arrangements.

While it was all very well to talk about keeping our nuclear and missile capacities options open, one had to finalise policy decisions in the political sphere keeping in mind, first and foremost, our national interest, apart from factors such as our access to the required raw materials, minerals, specialised metallurgical components, designs, drawings and technologies. These were the specialised aspects of policy making, in which the Ministry of External Affairs had but limited access to information, i.e., only on the need-to-know basis. This was an unavoidable limitation under the then existing arrangements and also the present one. If there had been a National Security Council, or a specialised division in the MEA dealing with such matters, this would not have been the case. Inputs from the Ministry of External Affairs to policy decisions, therefore, had necessarily to be partly speculative. In terms of security and strategic considerations, India had to take into account Pakistan's declared nuclear weapons status and its threatening postures; we could also not ignore China's nuclear weapons capacities and the uncertain and inaccessible stock of nuclear weapons spread all over the Central Asian Republics in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

It was the foregoing factors which influenced Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's negotiating stance on crucial issues

such as nuclear non-proliferation, missile development and space technology. First of all, the overarching strategy decided upon was that India would not be confrontationist *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world on these issues. Secondly, we decided to remain emphatically and irrevocably firm about not signing the NPT and not accepting any discriminatory stipulations or regimes on nuclear and space technology and missile development. Thirdly, we decided to use the fashionable phrase "to undertake exercises in constructive engagement" with the US in particular, and other Western democracies in general, so as to ascertain whether we could chalk out bilateral arrangements with them in terms of mutual transparency about our nuclear missile and space development programmes. Also, we wanted to explore whether we could agree to arrangements wherein, through transparency about each other's programmes and reciprocal confidence-building measures, we could allay their apprehensions.

It should be noted that we did not play the role of the "opposition". We resolutely maintained our stand on the NPT, while distancing ourselves from the discussions held in the NPT Preparatory Committee Review/Extension Conference by choosing not to be present. In doing so the question arises: did we let down the Non-aligned Movement? Prime Minister Rao clearly told US President George Bush and British Prime Minister John Major that India did not believe in piecemeal subregional arrangements of creating nuclear weapons-free zones, when all the nuclear powers could flex their muscles against the other countries of the world, regardless of the regions to which they belonged and regardless of whether they were nuclear powers or not.

Between 1992 and 1997, India was engaged in a series of bilateral discussions with the United States, the UK, France, Germany, Canada, Australia and Japan on non-proliferation issues. The most detailed and frequent discussions were, as expected, with the United States. Washington had realised that New Delhi would not sign the NPT but it was insistent on our participation in some sort of a regional conference. The US also

repeatedly demanded that India should not deploy the Prithvi missile and should not develop its IRBM (intermediate range ballistic missile) Agni. The US was also insisting on five-nation talks (the US, Russia, China, Pakistan and India) and later on seven-nation talks (plus Japan and Germany), to bring about a comprehensive test ban treaty and also to agree to stop production of fissile material (because, according to Washington, Pakistan was already complying with this stipulation). These US advocacies were repeated with varied emphases and intensities by other Western democracies and Japan during bilateral discussions held between us and these countries from September 1992 to the beginning of 1994. Our responses during these discussions were as follows:

(1) We are willing to join any genuine effort at bringing about non-discriminatory non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament arrangements.
(2 We would not join in any interim discriminatory regimes (including the CTBT) regardless of assurances and security guarantees which the US and others were willing to offer us.
(3) We were opposed to a South Asian nuclear weapons-free zone and to any conference aimed at meeting this limited objective.
(4) We were, however, willing to participate in a broader Asian conference with a larger number of participants to discuss possibilities of creating a nuclear-free zone in the whole Asian landmass and its adjacent seas provided that all the countries of the region plus all the countries which had the nuclear weapons capacity (to affect the security environment of the region) undertook mutual and equal obligations to make Asia free from threats of nuclear weapons.
(5) We also indicated that details pertaining to the terms of reference, the objectives and the participants in the conference (if held at all) should be worked out carefully and that they should be comprehensive. We also emphasised

that we would participate in such a conference only if there was a formal *a priori* assurance that the proposed enlarged Asian conference would be an interim step towards holding a global conference on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament within a definite time limit.

(6) We clearly indicated to all our interlocutors that we shall develop and deploy missiles of various categories depending upon our security requirements and that we will not accept unilateral or admonitory stipulations and "disciplinary measures" from any quarter.

(7) When the United States changed its position on nuclear testing, thus enabling beginning of negotiations, we agreed to work together to finalise a comprehensive test ban treaty provided it was universal, really comprehensive and non-discriminatory. On the US proposal on observing fissile material production restraint, unilaterally or bilaterally, with Pakistan, we were *successful* in moving the issue to the UN General Assembly and then to the Conference on Disarmament where it has remained stalemated since 1994. We had conveyed to the US and to the other nations during bilateral discussions that the extension of the non-proliferation treaty should be subject to changed realities in nuclear developments all over the world and the treaty should be reviewed and extended only on the basis of genuine international consensus.

In my discussions (between March 1992 and December 1994) with various US officials such as Under-Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff and the persons in charge of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (Ronald Lehman and Lyn Davis), I had made it clear that where India's national security interests were involved, there could be no compromise, nor would we succumb to any external pressure on issues related to the NPT, CTBT or FMCT.

In negotiations which preceded our co-sponsoring the resolution on the CTBT in the UN in 1993, we had made it

clear that the CTBT and other related agreements should be non-discriminatory, that all countries, specially the nuclear weapons countries, should undertake reciprocal and equal obligations about eschewing nuclear tests, with all provisions of the agreement and obligations inherent in them being applied equally, and without discrimination, to all countries, and that the time frame for meeting the obligations should be universal and non-discriminatory.

The United States, while not totally agreeing to our viewpoints, did not reject them either. This was the background in which the negotiations continued throughout 1993 till the beginning of 1994.

Our policy responses, as outlined earlier, were not the result of just bureaucratic consultations. In fact, Prime Minister Rao personally chaired the more important meetings in which representatives from the Department of Atomic Energy, the Department of Space, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Department of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Defence participated. At my suggestion, the Prime Minister also constituted an informal committee in mid-1992 comprising past Chairmen of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of Space as well as some scientists and defence experts to consider all aspects of India's nuclear and space policies, and to recommend the negotiating stance to be adopted by the Government of India. The Prime Minister had taken his cabinet colleagues as well as opposition leaders into confidence before finalising policy decisions.

The informal advisory committee did valuable work in 1992 and almost till the middle of 1993. Our negotiating stance was geared towards fulfilling three primary objectives (in which we were largely successful). First, our defence and strategic capacities in the spheres of nuclear missile technology and space technology had to be sustained and upgraded. Secondly, we had to avoid being completely isolated from the mainstream global trends on non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament issues.

Thirdly, we had to ensure the widest possible freedom of options for ourselves to increase our nuclear, missile and space capacities as time was running out because of the likelihood of punitive international regimes coming into force by 1996-97.

One interesting aspect of our negotiations with the advanced countries was that, at the political and technical levels, some of them, such as Germany, France and Japan, did not question the logic of our approach. Despite being signatories to the NPT and other regimes, they conveyed to us during unofficial and private discussions that, were they in India's place, they would have adopted the same negotiating stance. Representatives of these countries also agreed that the indefinite extension of the NPT without review and without modifying its contents would be an exercise full of contradictions and explosive potentialities. China was one country which did not pressurise us at all on nuclear or missile proliferation issues.

With the benefit of hindsight it can be said that, by early 1995, the US was sanguine that it would be able to push through the extension of the NPT without any modification. As a consequence, its negotiating stance on non-proliferation and missile technology issues became more assertive. From the summer of 1995 onwards, there were indications that the US, while desiring an early finalisation of the CTBT and other related agreements, was unwilling to accept the viewpoint of the Non-aligned countries, including India.

The replacement of George Bush's Republican Government by Bill Clinton's Democratic Government had, in fact, resulted in the US adopting an irrational and impractically assertive stance on these sensitive issues. These trends affected bilateral discussions between India and the US and also between India and other countries on such issues. Of necessity, India has had to change its negotiating stance on the CTBT which was being enforced in a new discriminatory framework. The United States has been accusing India of pulling back from commitments made by it. The US Government and US public opinion should pause and give serious thought to how US policies themselves have

changed since the beginning of 1994 on these issues, which, in turn, have evoked changed responses from India.

The possibilities of India and the US reaching an accord together again on non-proliferation matters would be entirely dependent on the willingness of the US to respect India's strategic interests and security concerns. The alternative would be an adversarial and complex phase in Indo-US relations on these issues.

I also hold the view that the relevance of measured ambiguity with respect to our nuclear weapons programme and missile capacity is coming to an end. Just declaring that we have certain potentialities is not enough. We must provide concrete proof that our potentialities are not limited to conceptual claims and that these potentialities are, in fact, operational realities. I am conscious that undertaking this kind of exercise will subject India to serious economic and political pressures and to the resulting consequences. Nevertheless, if we remain united and if our policies in regard to these critical issues are backed by national consensus, it is my firm belief that we will develop the resilience and grit to face negative consequences of proving our capacity in the short and medium terms. Eventually, the world at large will deal with us in terms of our proven capacities and strengths.

If, however, the potentialities which we claim are myths, the technological capacities which we claim are still in an evolutionary stage and not capable of reaching updated levels of achievement and impact, and if we cannot face the economic and other consequences with resilience and a willingness to adopt austerity measures, then we must become practical and adjust ourselves to a position in the international community as determined by the Great Powers. This would be a situation which, as an individual Indian citizen, I would not like to accept. Such was the emotional as well as intellectual motivation which prompted my negotiating stances on these issues based on government orders during my tenure as Foreign Secretary.

My last politically significant action regarding non-proliferation and disarmament related to exchange of views with Dr. Abdul Kalam, the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Defence, during December 1993 and January 1994. He asked me whether in the context of political discussions with the United States officials which I had in October 1993 and in the context of developments at the Disarmament Committee at the UN, the Ministry of External Affairs had any specific views on the deployment of the Prithvi missile and the test-firing of the Agni missile. I submitted to Prime Minister Rao that given the discriminatory orientation of the United States and other important countries in the UN on non-proliferation issues, we must not succumb to direct or indirect pressure exerted by them. The Prime Minister entirely agreed with my views and authorised me to grant the clearance from the Ministry of External Affairs for Dr. Kalam to proceed with the necessary work related to the deployment of Prithvi and the test-firing of Agni. We can look back with satisfaction on the fact that the last successful demonstration test of Agni took place early in 1994 and work on further improvement of our missile capacities has continued since then.*

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* *This chapter was written before India conducted the second round of nuclear tests in May 1998.*

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Economic Diplomacy

Jawaharlal Nehru's "Tryst with Destiny" speech (in August 1947) had underlined the fact that the achievement of political freedom was not sufficient to ensure and sustain the independence of India. Nehru had stressed that economic well-being and social justice were the two imperative and vital ingredients for giving meaning to independence and the achievement of liberty from colonial rule. At the time of independence (15 August 1947), India's economy was primarily agricultural. It had some industries in the textile and agricultural manufacturing sectors. The house of Tatas had set up steel and metallurgical industries during the colonial period. At that time, India, like most developing countries, had no heavy industries, no machine tool factories, and no capacity to build up the economic infrastructure in terms of transport, shipping, ports, aviation or power based on indigenous technical capacities or capital. India was dependent on the former colonial power and its allies for these essential requirements. Pandit Nehru's broad approach to meet India's needs is worth recounting.

First of all, given the long gestation period required for developing heavy industries and infrastructural sectors of the Indian economy, Nehru believed that both for resource mobilisation and for channelisation of these resources for the required tasks of economic reconstruction, the government had to play the commanding organisational role. In his opinion, the private sector, howsoever creative and public spirited, could not transcend the motivations of profit and short-term returns. He, therefore, felt that the elected government and its agencies had to play the role of originators and catalysts in India's economic development.

The second term of reference of his economic policies was to make India self-reliant in economic and technological terms as expeditiously as possible. He translated this approach into policy regarding economic cooperation with foreign countries by stipulating that, to the maximum extent possible, economic cooperation with technologically and industrially advanced countries should aim at enhancing India's indigenous technological, industrial and manufacturing capacities.

The third plank of his economic policies was that the entire process of economic development should aim at ensuring distributive justice, eradicating socio-economic inequalities to the maximum extent possible and ensuring that the distribution of wealth in free India was managed in a manner which would ensure long-term social equilibrium.

While Nehru understood the inextricable links between the political and economic processes, he did not fully transmute this perception to India's foreign policy operations. Institutional arrangements which he put in place were such that the Indian Ministry of External Affairs had very little to do with economic diplomacy. Economic aspects of India's foreign relations were primarily dealt with by ministries dealing with specific aspects of economic work. For instance, the Ministry of Finance, along with its Department of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Industry handled India's foreign economic relations throughout Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister and

Foreign Minister and even during Mrs. Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister. Economic diplomacy was not ignored but it was compartmentalised. This development prevented Indian foreign policy from evolving as an integrated phenomenon responsive to India's political and economic interests.

The objective here is not to describe or analyse the economic policies of India, but to deal with only one aspect of these policies, namely, the foreign relations aspect.

Before touching on broad policy orientations, a brief reference to the institutional arrangements for dealing with the economic aspects of our foreign policy would be relevant. The Ministry of External Affairs, though in charge of all aspects of India's foreign relations according to rules governing the distribution of work in the Central Government, was not considered sufficiently specialised to deal with foreign economic relations. Nor was any attempt made to recruit specialists in economic subjects into the Indian Foreign Service. All negotiations and transactions on economic relations were conducted by the officials of the specialised ministries mentioned earlier. Most of the important commercial and economic posts abroad were manned by officials from these ministries. Officials from the Indian Foreign Service dealt with such subjects only in diplomatic missions where the content and range of economic relations were limited. There was no separate bureau or division to deal with economic subjects in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs till the mid-1970s. Economic work was a marginal part of the responsibility of various territorial divisions dealing with different parts of the world. Pandit Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi entrusted the task of foreign commercial and economic relations to senior civil servants who had dealt with these subjects for long periods. Most of the Indian embassies had a commercial or economic wing manned by a Counsellor, a First Secretary or a Second Secretary, with supporting staff. But countries and regions of economic significance to India had Ambassadors and very senior representatives posted to deal with economic relations with those countries. Eminent Indians such as

Sir Shanmugam Chetty and B.K. Nehru represented India at the highest diplomatic levels in the United States. Other renowned individuals such as Dharam Vira, Sir N.R. Pillai and K.B. Lal were entrusted with responsibilities of managing India's economic relations with Western Europe. India's economic relations with China, East Europe and the Soviet Union were not of great substance during the first decade after independence. Significantly, the senior civil servants listed here, while serving as Ambassadors in one country, were given economic jurisdiction over the entire region. All these individuals had the additional designation of "Commissioners-General for Economic Affairs". The Indian representative in Washington covered the entire Western hemisphere, while those posted in European countries managed economic relations with the entire West European region. Indian representations on the boards of the multilateral financial institutions were also from the specialised economic ministries of the Government of India and *not* from the Indian Foreign Service.

A contributory factor to the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Foreign Service not getting involved in economic diplomacy and not specialising in this vital sphere of foreign relations was a functional and psychological attitude inherited from the colonial past, i.e., from the "foreign and political department" of the British Indian Government, which was the precursor to the Ministry of External Affairs and from the British Foreign Office, on which the Indian Foreign Office had been patterned. Economic work was not considered important, glamorous or attractive enough in terms of the career prospects in the Foreign Service. Most members of the service desired to do political work or politico-security work at home and abroad. At the headquarters, the inclination was to be employed either in one of the territorial divisions or bureaux dealing with the United Nations and international operations. Once in a while, suggestions were made during the initial years of independence that officers from the Indian Foreign Service should go and work in the economic ministries. The response from the Foreign

Service was negative and resistant. Doing economic work was considered a matter of lesser, even lower, importance. Members of the Indian Foreign Service suffered from the illusion that only political work was meaningful. The result of such an attitude was that members of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) who specialised in economic work, took over the conduct of India's foreign economic relations at the operational level. There was a lamentable lack of awareness about the profound technological and economic impulses which affected the substance of international relations and the foreign policies of different countries. The only segment of external economic relations in which our Ministry of External Affairs and members of the Indian Foreign Service played a role was in relation to work being done in the United Nations and its specialised agencies. In fact, nearly three generations of Indian Foreign Service members played quite a significant role in the United Nations and its agencies as well as multilateral fora, such as the Non-aligned Movement, on matters of economic relevance to developing countries.

The Ministry of External Affairs personnel, especially members of the Indian Foreign Service, were attracted to multilateral economic functions in the United Nations and its agencies because working on any of the UN operations was considered beneficial for career prospects and also had the accompanying glamour of the atmospherics attached to multilateral diplomacy.

Looking back, one can infer that India's foreign economic relations were managed through separate, but parallel, administrative and institutional procedures. Bilateral economic, commercial and technological relations and matters of substance were dealt with by our specialised economic ministries and their officers. Multilateral economic work in finance institutions such as the IMF and IBRD and other such banks which came into being later as well as work related to GATT was also dealt with by ministries other than the Ministry of External Affairs. The MEA and the Indian Foreign Service dealt with the United

Nations, the ECOSOC, the Second and Fifth Committee of the UN General Assembly and with entities such as the UNCTAD, the G-77 and the Non-aligned Movement.

The point to note is that the Ministry of External Affairs dealt with organisational entities which handled international economic issues at the macro-economic and cosmetic levels only. While the MEA got passionately involved in drafting and passing resolutions and prepared documents on development decades, or fashioning hortatory declarations and appeals on economic matters, the specialised economic ministries of the Government of India dealt with down-to-earth substantive issues.

A consciousness that the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Foreign Service were being marginalised in the conduct of India's foreign economic relations emerged in the collective perception of both these bodies by the mid-1970s. Two important reports on the reorganisation and reforms in the Indian Foreign Service, prepared by committees headed by Sir N.R. Pillai in the late 1960s and Ambassador Samar Sen in the 1980s, made specific recommendations that the members of the IFS should be trained to do economic work and that they, at the middle and senior middle levels, should be encouraged to specialise in dealing with economic, scientific and technological diplomacy. Some recommendations went to the extent of stipulating that officers who have not done economic work at some point of time in their career should not be eligible for promotion to posts of Joint Secretary and above. There were two consequences of these recommendations. First, a larger number of Foreign Service officers were assigned economic and commercial work in our diplomatic missions abroad. Secondly, the specialised economic ministries of the Government of India agreed to accept Foreign Service officers to work on deputation with them. The result was that a number of Foreign Service officers got posted to Ministries of Commerce and Finance and the Department of Economic Affairs from the 1970s onwards. By the mid-1970s, the Ministry of External Affairs also established a separate division to deal with foreign economic

relations. The process commenced with the establishment of a separate bureau or division to administer the Indian technological and economic cooperation programme, namely, the "ITEC" 1982. Further, the Ministry of External Affairs had a full-time Secretary dealing with economic relations. In 1990 four separate divisions were created to deal with various aspects of economic diplomacy. The first division was to deal with bilateral economic relations. The second was to deal with ITEC. The third was to deal with multilateral economic relations and the fourth to deal with economic cooperation in the South Asian region, designated as the SAARC Division. The fact is that the importance of economic diplomacy and foreign economic relations dawned quite late in the mind of the foreign policy establishment of the Government of India, i.e., nearly three decades after the country became independent.

The Ministry of External Affairs neglecting its possible role in conducting foreign economic relations for so many years has resulted in vested interests against the MEA questioning first the capacity of, and then the need for, the MEA to get involved in economic work. This state of affairs has resulted in resistance from other ministries to relinquish responsibility for foreign economic relations to the Ministry of External Affairs. This battle for turf still continues. There are many factors contributing to this phenomenon. There is the functional factor of dealing with the substance of economic relations and the power and authority related to such work. There is also the factor of manning attractive and remunerative foreign posts not only in Indian diplomatic missions abroad but also in the secretariats of various multilateral financial and economic organisations. There is the competition for travelling abroad and for participating in intergovernmental economic discussions and conferences. Though the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Foreign Service have still a long way to go before they become fully responsible for India's foreign economic relations and acquire the necessary knowledge and competence, these two bodies have been playing an expanding role in economic diplomacy since the beginning of the 1990s.

After 1991, the process of modernisation and liberalisation of the Indian economy has also diluted the excessively dominant role which government departments and civil services have played in economic management. Increasing autonomy in the conduct of foreign economic relations and structuring foreign economic cooperation would, hopefully, enable the Ministry of External Affairs to play a facilitating or a catalytic role in furthering India's economic interests through the instrumentality of economic diplomacy. Vested interests of the specialised ministries to deal with economic relations would also get proportionately diluted because the substantive management of economic matters would progressively devolve on civil society and the private sector. This process of decentralisation will also contribute to the Ministry of External Affairs playing the role of an anlayser, observer and adviser to the economic community of our country.

Having said this, a brief survey of broad trends in our foreign economic relations would be necessary.

India primarily looked for assistance for its economic reconstruction and consolidation towards North America and West Europe during the first decade after independence. But the countries of these regions were not responsive to India's needs for three reasons. First, India refused to join them in the emerging Cold War confrontation against the Soviet Union and other communist countries. Secondly, India's planned economy and socialist orientations and its insistence on getting assistance for becoming self-reliant did not mesh in with the economic interests and profit motivations of the industrialised Western countries. (India's insistence that external inputs into the Indian economy should be in areas of priority determined by the Indian people through their elected government did not suit the capitalist orientations of the West.) The third reason was India's firm stand that foreign investments should be accompanied by transfer of technology which would help India develop its own indigenous technological capacities. Business communities of the West were reluctant to accept such a stand as it would have

reduced their prospects of exports to India in order to exploit the large Indian market. A case in point was USA's Bethlehem Steel Company's objections to the US Government's assisting India in setting up a modern steel plant on the argument that such assistance would reduce export prospects of steel products to India. Between 1954 and 1956, Jawaharlal Nehru was sufficiently disillusioned with the reticence and refusal of the industrially advanced Western democracies to turn to the Soviet Union and East Europe for economic and technological assistance. Initial discussions were held between Nehru and the then leaders of the Soviet Union Nikolai Bulganin and Nikita Khruschev between 1954 and 1956. A fruitful pattern of commercial, economic and technological cooperation between India and the Soviet Union and other East European countries resulted from these exchanges. The process continues even today to the mutual benefit of India and these countries despite the profound political changes that have affected the world since 1989.

The competitive reaction to India's expanding technological and economic cooperation with the socialist bloc was that the Western democracies became conscious of the economic opportunities available in India. By the early 1960s, West Germany, France and the United Kingdom got involved in substantive economic activities and technological projects in the sectors of steel, power, transportation, port development and telecommunications. The United States also joined the process. Apart from giving large-scale food assistance to India on humanitarian grounds, the US made significant contributions to the development of Indian nuclear power reactors, to space exploration and to agricultural development programmes. The US also made substantial contributions to the manufacturing and engineering sectors of the Indian economy. By the mid-1970s, when Mrs. Indira Gandhi had been in power for almost a decade, an equilibrium had been established in India's economic relations with the West and Japan on the one hand and with the socialist countries on the other. By this time, India had also

qualitatively improved its technological capacities and the trained manpower base for its economic development.

The trend set in motion towards the end of Nehru's prime ministership (May 1964) were characterised by continuity and augmentation during Mrs. Indira Gandhi's rule and during the subsequent tenures of Morarji Desai, Mrs. Indira Gandhi again and Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Ministers (i.e., from 1966 to 1989).

The reduction in the intensity of the Cold War confrontation from 1987 onwards and the spirit of perestroika (evoked by Mikhail Gorbachev) signalled the process of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation in the international economic trends. Rajiv Gandhi, anticipating the impact of these forces on the Indian economy, had commenced the processes of decentralising and liberalising the economic management.

Narasimha Rao's becoming Prime Minister (in June 1991) and Dr. Manmohan Singh becoming Finance Minister marked a watershed in India's external economic relations. There were changes both in policies and institutional arrangements relating to the conduct of India's external economic relations. Apart from the expansion of the economic divisions in the Ministry of External Affairs (mentioned earlier in this chapter), the MEA not only became actively involved in the interpretation and projection of India's economic policies and objectives but also became a participant in an advisory role in the formulation of these policies and in defining Indian interests and objectives in the context of anticipated external attitudes and responses from the international community. As Foreign Secretary to the Government of India from 1991 to 1994, I was both witness to, and participant in, this epoch-making process. So the reader will indulge me if I give a somewhat personalised account of more contemporary economic developments which follow along with general assessments of the issues which affected India's foreign economic diplomacy in recent years.

I was made an ex-officio member of the Apex Committee of Secretaries on economic policy and also of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board. Participation in meetings of the

FIPB under the chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Amar Nath Verma, proved to be a great education for the Ministry of External Affairs, both in terms of India's changing internal economic management techniques and with respect to the motivations and interests guiding foreign economic participation in India's plans for economic restructuring and regeneration. The FIPB met every Saturday, of which the Finance Secretary, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, the Commerce Secretary, the Foreign Secretary and Secretary, Industrial Development, were permanent members. Secretaries to the Government of India from other concerned departments attended the meetings as invited members, if the proposals for investment being considered involved their respective ministries. The Cabinet Secretary was also an ex-officio member.

I was informed that, in the initial stages of the constitution of the FIPB, the Ministry of Industry was not very happy about this board being chaired by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. However, the Finance Minister (who chaired the highest Cabinet-level Committee on foreign investments and foreign economic operations) felt that the FIPB being chaired by the aforementioned individual would give this body sufficient clout and would expedite the decision-making processes, thereby overcoming the endemic bureaucratic hurdles obstructing the functioning of the Government of India.

After my retirement as Foreign Secretary, when K. Karunakaran was inducted as the Union Minister for Industry, he himself wanted to become the Chairman of the FIPB. In my view, the board being safeguarded from strong political participation by the Prime Minister was desirable from the administrative as well as political points of view. The projects which came up for consideration and approval, throughout my tenure, did not confirm the general critical perception that most of the foreign investments were in the consumer sector and that foreign investors were not interested in inputs in the core sectors of the Indian economy and in building up the infrastructure for our development efforts. Foreign investors did

show interest in sectors such as transportation, power, metallurgy, surface and shipping transport, telecommunications and hydrocarbons. All this was apart from the projects related to toothpastes, soaps, potato chips, fried chicken and foreign brands of ice-cream. These latter items evoked much criticism, which was not entirely valid. I also got the distinct impression that diatribes against Prime Minister Rao and Dr. Manmohan Singh were partially politically motivated in terms of party politics and partially due to the inabilities of certain sectors of our academic, journalistic and intellectual elite to break out of the ideological grooves in which they had been stuck for nearly four decades after independence.

The Secretaries in the Ministries of Finance, Commerce and External Affairs and those in the Prime Minister's Office managed to evolve fairly effective coordinating arrangements for galvanising different aspects of the Indian economy in terms of export performance, investment, acquisition and absorption technologies and also for availing of emerging economic opportunities. One of the most important qualitative developments in the chemistry of governmental functioning was that the patronising and authoritative attitude of the bureaucrats towards the business community underwent a change. Economic liberalisation and reform programmes created new norms and terms of reference by which the bureaucracy started functioning. Interaction between government departments and the private sector became more cooperative, more frequent and more positive. The FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM* leadership played a very important role in bringing about the transformation.

There were, however, major difficulties as well as certain significant hurdles which one encountered while trying to project India's economic policies and programmes through our foreign policy statements and through the operations of our missions. The

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* *Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Confederation of Indian Industries and Associated Chambers of Commerce.*

first hurdle was that party politics interfered with administrative and political measures while implementing the economic reforms introduced by Narasimha Rao and Dr. Manmohan Singh. Larger inputs in the core sector of the Indian economy remained a cautious exercise on the part of the foreign investors in the background of consistent criticism voiced in the tirades of certain political parties and leaders. Foreign governments or foreign companies could not and would not invest extensively in India till they were convinced that a national consensus existed regarding Indian economic reforms and that such reforms would continue regardless of changes in government to which any democratic society is subject. However, this was not the case. The reverses suffered by the Congress in the elections in 1996 confirmed this assessment. The two United Front Governments, led first by Deva Gowda and then I.K. Gujral as Prime Ministers, could not do anything effective to counter this apprehension on the part of foreign investors and non-resident Indians (NRIs). So, the question of India's foreign economic policies being purposive and maintaining a continuity in these respects did not arise. The second hurdle was our provincial or state governments and their bureaucracies not being fully aware of the very fundamental changes which the Union Government was bringing about in the Indian economy and in the management of the country's economic activities. There existed a gap in the flow of updated information from the Centre to the state governments. The situation was compounded by the fact that the bureaucracies at the state levels and even some elements of the bureaucracies in the Central Government were reluctant to divest themselves of their prerogatives and powers (which they had acquired in the pre-liberalisation era) in implementing the new economic policies. While decisions would be finalised at the political level, at the bureaucratic level, they would be delayed or misinterpreted or they would be subjected to procedural involutions, due to long-established vested interests, which slowed down the process of economic changes which the government wanted to bring about. More importantly, this state of affairs adversely affected the

image of our efficiency and our credibility in the eyes of the world at large. Advanced countries have often voiced the criticism that the Chinese have performed much better in implementing their economic reforms and in modernising their economy, which was much more efficient, transparent and developing faster compared to that of India.

Such criticism is not unjustified. But the redeeming argument in favour of India would be that China has a one-party authoritarian regime where government decisions are implemented by a fiat in a regimented manner, whereas, in India, Narasimha Rao and Dr. Manmohan Singh had not only to deal with motivated political denunciation from opposition parties but they also had to carry their own fractious political party with them while formulating and implementing crucial decisions in the economic field.

Also, certain sections of our own business community, long used to operating in a protected, non-competitive environment, were not enthusiastic about the changes being brought about. The repeated demand for "a level playing field" in many cases camouflaged the advocacy for continuing protectionist measures or safeguarding those sections in the private sector which were not willing to become more competitive, more productive and more quality conscious in their operations.

The logical argument put forward by Prime Minister Rao, that the measures taken by various elected Governments of India in structuring India's economy at each stage of its evolution since independence were relevant and valid at those given points of time and that India should not be afraid of change, did not wash with certain sections of our business community which wanted to be secure about their profits based on limited and poor quality and low productivity. Even more important was the fact of their unwillingness to see the writing on the wall that if we did not anticipate the emerging challenges in the international economic environment and if we did not fashion appropriate and effective responses to them, India would face certain inevitable consequences, adversely impinging on the

well-being of our vast population and on related developmental needs. This was an important handicap and it remains so.

Moreover, vested interests trying to hinder or sabotage projects and programmes with foreign collaboration and foreign investment in a vast country like ours was inevitable. The Government of India remained enmeshed in a continuing exercise in crisis management while implementing its reforms and restructuring programme. A few examples would be relevant here. The following two incidents took place between August 1992 and November 1993. Some farmers of Karnataka irrationally took it into their heads to challenge the agriculture seed improvement and distribution programme which was being undertaken in collaboration with Cargils, a US company. These farmers attacked the offices of the company in Bangalore and destroyed its equipment and laboratories. Similarly, a Japanese delegation which visited Tamilnadu and Karnataka to explore the possibilities of setting up joint ventures in the sphere of high technology and electronics was subjected to protests and demonstrations by local businessmen. Adverse developments relating to Enron (a power project in Maharashtra) and a number of foreign projects which occurred between 1994 and 1996 confirmed the continuation of this xenophobic phenomenon. Even if the reasons given for questioning or preventing such projects from coming into existence are valid, the basic point is that all these questions and doubts have been raised *after* these projects had been finalised on the basis of the Government of India's approval and commitments. Such questions and doubts have also been trumpeted during election time or when there has been a change in the ruling party in certain states. All such developments inevitably create the impression abroad that continuity in our policies and commitments to projects and programmes are subject to vagaries of populist politics. If mistakes had been made while negotiating such projects and programmes and if procedural lapses, hiking of prices or corruption had resulted, the remedy would have been to fix the responsibility on those Indian individuals/organisations who/which made commitments to parties

abroad and subject them to remedial or punitive action. The solution does not lie in trying to scrap the projects which would ultimately benefit the people. There is no justification in trying to rationalise our ineptitude: nor should we expect the world at large to be patient and tolerant about the oscillations in our policies and attitudes beyond a certain threshold, especially in the economic and technological fields.

Such were the complications which formed the primary concern of India's foreign economic policies in the 1990s. It was these phenomena which the Ministry of External Affairs and our embassies abroad had to explain, rationalise and justify to keep our foreign economic interests on track. Consequently, we strengthened the Economic Division in the Ministry of External Affairs. We ensured that there was an updated flow of information between India and the foreign countries about relevant economic matters. We functioned as facilitators for seminars, discussions, investment meetings, exhibitions and workshops on foreign trade. For the first time India commenced participating in the International Economic Conference held annually at Davos in Switzerland. Prime Minister Rao went to Davos twice during his five-year term. On other occasions too, India has been invariably represented by a Union Minister and a top-notch delegation from our private sector.

The renowned journal *Economist* (of London) started organising an annual conference every winter on economic opportunities in India since 1991. At such conferences, apart from businessmen from abroad and India interacting with each other, foreign entrepreneurs were given an opportunity to meet ministers and seniormost officials of the Government of India dealing with economic, investment and technological issues. Joint business councils and joint business initiative fora were created in collaboration with important industrially advanced countries; in fact, practically with all the G-7 countries. Both the Ministry of External Affairs and our embassies played an important role in creating these new institutional mechanisms for furthering India's economic and technological interests.

Commerce Secretary A.V. Ganesan and Additional Secretary, Commerce, Anwar Hoda, were involved in the final stages of the Uruguay Round of negotiations through 1992 till December 1993. My role as well as that of the Ministry of External Affairs in this exercise was marginal; i.e., to keep our technically qualified colleagues fully briefed about the political undercurrents and motivations animating the negotiating stances of various countries on the proposed agreements aimed at establishing the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The real work was done by Ganesan and Hoda under the direction of our Union Finance and Commerce Ministries. One has to acknowledge that though we participated in the negotiations actively and effectively and though we ultimately became part of the final agreements signed at Marakash, we were not successful in fully safeguarding all our interests. Issues relating to intellectual property rights and export of goods and services were not resolved to our satisfaction and continue to pose problems to us even now. What was worse was that after the finalisation of the agreements, the US Congress delayed the full ratification and establishment of the WTO, suggesting further modifications to the agreement and stipulating extraneous social, cultural and labour norms for trade between developing and advanced countries. This move amounted to a thinly veiled attempt at reviving the protectionist trends in international trade in favour of the advanced countries. If the United States and other advanced countries such as Germany and Japan and, to some extent France, do not desist from these backsliding shenanigans, the proposed new world trade order is bound to be flawed and subject to tensions.

One aspect of India's negotiating stance *vis-à-vis* the World Trade Organisation agreements is worth mentioning, namely, the political aspect of the negotiations. India's negotiating position has evolved subject to the changes of government in the country from the late 1970s right up to 1993.

The Morarji Desai Government (1977-79) had a very limited role to play in these negotiations as processes for them were

just being set in motion. During Mrs. Gandhi's second tenure (1980-84), there was an ideological tussle between the traditionalists and the "reformists". The former believed that developing countries would be able to take a united stand on matters of their common interest and would be able to influence the agreements on the anvil. This approach was advocated by experts and senior civil servants in the Foreign Office and in the Finance Ministry. The other school of thought was that such unity among the developing countries was becoming progressively a thing of the past and that it would be better for India to adjust to the new orientations being devised by the international trading and economic order in a manner in which the country's basic interests would be protected and it would not get isolated. This view prevailed among some experts in the Planning Commission, in the Commerce Ministry and in other technical ministries. These opposing views also characterised the bureaucracies within the Foreign Office as well as the Ministry of Finance.

The point to note is that the Ministry of External Affairs did not have any active role in the decision-making processes related to the WTO during the tenure of Foreign Secretaries R.D. Sathe, M.K. Rasgotra, Romesh Bhandari, A.P. Venkateswaran, K.P.S. Menon and S.K. Singh. These individuals were at the helm of the Ministry of External Affairs from 1979 to 1990. It was only during the foreign secretaryship of Muchkund Dubey, from March-April 1990 to November 1991, that our Foreign Office played a comparatively influential and active role in WTO-related negotiations. Dubey's professional background in economic diplomacy and in multilateral economic relations and also his academic and intellectual interest in the subject led to his making the Foreign Office a participant in this process.

The period 1989 to 1991, when Dubey was at headquarters, was also the crucial final phase of these negotiations. He, along with the then Finance Secretary Shukla, did not favour compromises with the orientations of the industrially advanced countries on the future of the international trading order. Their

counterparts in the Commerce Ministry held a different view. The consequence, as far as I could gather, was that our negotiating stance was not based on a harmonious and cohesive approach. It was subject to undercurrents of contradictions within the Government of India.

The V.P. Singh Government which came to power in late 1989 was so enmeshed in exercises of political survival that the higher political direction necessary to overcome the foregoing contradictions was not really available.

During the period immediately before V.P. Singh became Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi was inclined towards a practical rather than an ideological approach. He was also clear and, with the benefit of hindsight, was correct in his assessment that developing countries would participate in these negotiations within the narrower framework of their respective national economic, commercial and technological interests. There was no possibility of a unified approach on the part of the developing countries being forged to motivate the general orientations of these negotiations.

When I took over as Foreign Secretary, the WTO negotiations were more or less over. Experts and bureaucrats at the helm of affairs in the Commerce Ministry, the Finance Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office had also changed. Under the influence and guidance of Narasimha Rao and Dr. Manmohan Singh, a practical and down-to-earth approach in completing these negotiations was adopted.

The Ministry of External Affairs did not play any major role in the final stages of the Uruguay Round of negotiations and in the finalisation of the 29 agreements which were signed at Marakash (in Morrocco) in 1995. The substantive advisory role in policy-making in this respect was played by the Finance Ministry, the Commerce Ministry and Prime Minister's Office. Despite the responsibilities assigned to the Foreign Office for economic policy, the MEA played only a limited role in the process. More detailed and continuous consultations with the Ministry of External Affairs would have perhaps enabled India

to evolve a policy containing checks and balances and options to counter the later demands and stipulations as well as additionalities (that have been put forward by the industrially advanced countries), which are detrimental to India's interests in terms of intellectual property rights, agricultural products and effective control over India's biodiversity and genetic sources. One can only rationalise this shortcoming by the explanation that the role of the Ministry of External Affairs is still in the process of evolution and expansion in the sphere of economic diplomacy in the context of the profound changes which Indian economic policies have been undergoing since 1991.

Though I have mentioned the administrative and procedural efforts undertaken by the Ministry of External Affairs to carry out economic reorientation and to underscore the changed emphasis in our foreign policy, we remained subject to certain limitations. The first major problem pertained to resource constraints and shortage of manpower. The additional personnel needed to undertake the required networking for the implementation of our new foreign economic policies were just not available to the MEA. Our missions abroad as well as headquarters remained understaffed at the middle and higher middle operational levels. Secondly, the structure and organisation of our bureaucracy were resistant to the lateral infusion of specialists and experts into the relevant departments of the government to remedy this predicament. I managed, with the support of three individuals, namely, the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, the Finance Secretary and the Commerce Secretary, to obtain some posts for Foreign Service officers in the Ministries of Commerce and Finance, Department of Defence Production and so on. I found the office of the Cabinet Secretary and the Department of Personnel reluctant to provide opportunities for officers of the Foreign Service to acquire the necessary knowledge and expertise by working in other concerned government departments. My tentative recommendations that the Government of India should seriously consider the recruitment of economic, technical and commercial

experts on short-term contracts to work at headquarters in the MEA as well as in our missions abroad were resisted by my service colleagues on the grounds that such an exercise would affect the promotion prospects of regular IFS officers. When I pointed out that these posts would be ex-cadre and could be based on short-term contracts, they were not convinced. But greater opposition came from the Department of Personnel and the other economic ministries of the Government of India, which felt that such an arrangement would encroach upon the privileged turf of the superior Civil Services of India. I must confess to not having succeeded in this effort of mine.

Despite the abovementioned limitations, the MEA managed to expand its role in the conduct of India's foreign economic relations.

One important aspect of economic diplomacy in which the Ministry of External Affairs got involved was the preparation of presentation slides, diskettes and other publicity material for projecting India's foreign economic policy as well as for focussing on economic and investment opportunities in India. The technological capacities of the Indian industry and the commercial potential of the Indian markets were highlighted. The ministry undertook this task in collaboration with apex organisations of the private sector as well as government and external agencies specialising in fields of advertising, publicity and informatics.

Here again, apart from lack of resources, the other limitations which bogged down the MEA were delays in our information retrieval systems, in updating data and information and in providing quick-time responses. Also, there were shortcomings in the quality of the presentation and publicity material which we had provided compared to similar material from other Asian countries, particularly from the ASEAN.

Indian economic diplomacy had to cope with abiding undercurrents of protectionism and discrimination with respect to the trading and technology transfer policies of the advanced industrial countries. We also had to labour under the irrational linkages which such countries sought to establish between political considerations and economic and developmental

cooperation. We had to question and then monitor policy orientations and decisions of foreign countries which stipulated certain preconditions for entering into arrangements for economic cooperation with India. Extraneous issues such as social clauses were attempted to be imposed on normal commercial transactions. Also, issues related to unjustified and discriminatory regimes were being imposed on the transfer of dual use technology as well as other advanced technologies to India in the fields of lasers, robotics, genetic engineering and so on. All these matters had to be dealt with in order to safeguard our interests. We had to coordinate our briefings and policy stances on all these issues in a manner in which consistency had to be maintained without getting into self-contradictory positions by mischance or accident.

Above all, our economic diplomacy had to convince the world at large that while we understood the necessity of being an active and productive part of the globalised economic arrangement, we also had to ensure optimum levels of social equilibrium and distributive justice in an overpopulated country like ours where economic disparities led to volatile situations.

As a postscript, I should add that the problems which I have mentioned towards the end of this chapter have acquired greater seriousness due to the manner in which some of our state governments have handled projects based on collaboration with foreign companies and governments. While making this criticism, I must underline the fact that there is no question of compromising on any aspect of our national interests. But the crucial question to which all of us should seek an unprejudiced answer is whether all the contradictions and delays that have afflicted our economic policies are really based on considerations of genuine national interest? Alternatively, are these uncertainties a result of party and electoral politics? If the latter phenomenon is the reality, then no amount of diplomatic skill and foreign policy expertise in economic matters can resolve the problems that we face and are likely to face.

13

The Decision-making Process: Political and Functional Aspects

At the outset, I would like to draw a distinction between the political and functional aspects which characterised the decision-making processes of foreign policy though the processes were inevitably intermeshed. When I refer to the "political" processes, I refer to the role played by the political leadership, the Parliament and the media. When I talk about the "functional" aspect of the decision-making processes, I refer to the role played by the Indian Foreign Service and the technical and intelligence services of India in foreign policy-making.

First, the political processes. Looking back to the Nehru era, the most discernible characteristic of the foreign policy decision-making process then was that there were no institutional and structured policy planning mechanisms underpinning the making of foreign policy. There was, of course, the Ministry of External Affairs manned by former ICS (Indian Civil Service) officers and the newly recruited members of the Indian Foreign Service; Parliament was taken into confidence as and when necessary, but their role in foreign policy-making was limited.

Jawaharlal Nehru played a one-man central role as the perceiver of national interests and concerns, as the conceptualiser of policies and the decider on specific options to implement them. He was the initiator of policies and actions on all aspects of external affairs. He interacted with the Members of Parliament to ensure public support for his policies, but not so much to get inputs from them. He utilised the Foreign Service to execute the policies which he decided upon. The advisory and analytical role of the Foreign Service was limited. Nehru had the unique advantage of being exposed to cross-currents of international relations, during the interwar period, during the Second World War period and in its aftermath. He had more connections with a cross-section of leaders of the international community and a greater understanding of the intricacies of international relations than most of the leaders of the Indian National Movement. He had the additional advantage of being backed up by unqualified national consensus in respect of the priorities which he determined for India's foreign policy and the policy options which he decided upon to meet these priorities. He maintained this overarching leadership role right from 1946 up to 1962. His influence only diminished after the Sino-Indian war of 1962, i.e., only during the last two years of his tenure as Prime Minister, out of the seventeen and half years during which he was at the helm of affairs. He sustained his leadership role by nurturing the national consensus on foreign policy which he did by adopting two measures. First, by taking into confidence not only his own party but also Opposition political parties about his major policy decisions, through discussions and debates in Parliament and through contacts with leaders of the print media. Secondly, he ensured his pre-eminence by writing fortnightly letters to the Chief Ministers of all the states of India in which he informed them not only about his domestic concerns but also about international developments and how India was reacting to them. He undertook this exercise in political education consciously. He also utilised public meetings and party meetings for the same purpose. Throughout the period of his prime ministership, he

scrupulously upheld the formalities of institutional processes of decision-making, through cabinet meetings, through its Committee on Political Affairs and through meetings of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on External Affairs. While he maintained the integrity of the procedural processes in substance, his interaction was with particular individuals depending on their knowledge, their background and their experience with respect to the issues involved.

In the early years after independence, political luminaries such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and intellectuals such as Pandit H.N. Kunzru, Dr. Tara Chand and K.M. Pannicker were Nehru's advisers. Nehru depended on Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel in structuring policies related to Muslim countries and countries of the South Asian region. He utilised the advice of the other aforementioned individuals in dealing with South-East Asia, West Asia, China and the Far East. He took counsel from other renowned individuals such as Lord Louis Mountbatten, Lady Edwina Mountbatten, his many British friends, V.K. Krishna Menon and Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai in dealing with the United Kingdom, the United States of America and other Western democracies.

After the passing away of Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel, Krishna Menon became Nehru's most influential adviser. Nehru also depended on the first Foreign Secretary of India, K.P.S. Menon, and on Dr. S. Radhakrishnan while dealing with China and the Soviet Union. As his contacts with leaders of newly independent countries increased, his decision-making process on macro-level issues was influenced by such interaction, especially with President Abdul Gamel Nasser of Egypt and Marshal Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia. It is relevant to note that he did not find much in common with leaders of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal or Indonesia. The only South-East Asian leader with whom he had a personal equation was Thakin Nu of Burma.

The point to be noted is that all the foregoing processes occurred on the basis of personal equations. Nehru did not feel the need for setting up institutional arrangements such as a

policy planning cell or an interdepartmental coordination committee to fashion foreign policy. The Intelligence Bureau and the Intelligence Directorates of the three branches of the armed forces, as they emerged, functioned autonomously and dealt with very specific issues or questions. There was practically very little institutional coordination among the various intelligence agencies of the Government of India and the Defence and External Affairs Ministries. No integrated strategic assessment of the threat potential, of the evolving security environment or of foreign and defence policy issues was provided to the Prime Minister or the Government of India for structuring policies on the basis of "availability of real time information". Failures in India's foreign and defence policies during the first 15 years after independence could be attributed to this shortcoming.

A few examples should drive home the point. India not being fully aware of Chinese reservations about India's leadership role at the Bandung Conference; India's going to the United Nations on the Kashmir issue in 1948 (which was not necessary legally, politically or militarily); India's delayed discovery of China building a road in the Aksai Chin area within Indian territory in Ladkah; India's incorrect assessment of Chinese intentions *vis-à-vis* Sino-Indian boundary disputes; India's lack of knowledge regarding Chinese military capacities in 1961-62; and India's military defeat in October-November 1962 at the hands of China. One can add to this list India's inadequate forces deployment and impractical logistical, infrastructural and defence framework up to 1962. Factors such as Jawaharlal Nehru's eminence as an idealist leader of international stature, his worldview imbued with an approach of rational humanism, his transparently sincere and deep commitment to peace, disarmament and development offset the foregoing inadequacies and accorded India a role entailing international influence and leadership. Such a role was based entirely on Nehru's charisma and magnetic personality, without any correlation with India's military or economic strengths and resources.

After Nehru's demise in May 1964, Mrs. Gandhi brought about changes in foreign policy decision-making mechanisms as well as procedures. The composite Intelligence Bureau dealing with internal as well as external intelligence work was bifurcated. Intelligence organisations dealing with internal security and domestic counter-espionage were separated. A new intelligence agency was created to deal with external intelligence and pre-emptive gathering of information from abroad which was relevant to India's security. A Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) was established which comprised representatives from the Civil Service, armed forces, the intelligence organisations, the Defence Ministry, the Ministry of External Affairs and other relevant ministries or departments such as finance, commerce, space, science and technology and nuclear energy. An officer of the rank of Secretary to the Government of India became the Chairman of the JIC. The JIC reported to the Apex Committee of Secretaries of the Government of India dealing with internal and external security and defence and foreign policies. This latter committee was chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, with the Home Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Foreign Secretary and the heads of the intelligence organisations as members.

Reports of the JIC, according to requirements, were issue-specific or focussed on long-term planning and alternative options. Problems, policy options and points for decision were then sent to the Prime Minister's Office through the concerned ministry, i.e., External Affairs, Defence or Finance. If the Prime Minister felt that the points brought up to him needed collective deliberation at the cabinet level before decisions could be taken, then these points were discussed at the meetings of the Cabinet Committee for Political Affairs, the Cabinet Committee for Defence or the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. This arrangement has continued and has become institutionalised since 1966.

Another institutional arrangement brought about was the creation of the military Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee consisting of the chiefs of staff of the three branches of the

armed forces of India with a back-up secretariat. This committee receives inputs from the defence planning staff which is an interservices organisation located in the Defence Ministry and is headed by an officer of the rank of a three-star General of one of the services. There are representatives from the Ministry of Defence and the MEA in this organisation. The MEA also has a Policy Planning Division headed by an officer of the rank of Additional Secretary to the Government of India who works under direct supervision of the Foreign Secretary. This division or bureau of the Foreign Office liaises with the Defence Ministry, Departments of Space, Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology, the armed forces, the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and other relevant departments. Its tasks entail medium and long-term foreign policy planning and also providing relevant information, position papers and policy options to the Foreign Minister of India.

The terms of reference and functions of the aforementioned agencies and organisations have gained institutional strength over the years. Needless to say, the personality and the inclination of the respective Prime Minister and those of his or her senior cabinet colleagues have determined the range and content of influence exerted or exercised by these agencies on government decisions related to foreign and defence policies. These inter-ministerial arrangements have been supplemented by the substantive day-to-day work of the Regional and Territorial Divisions of the Ministry of External Affairs as well as those of the Ministries of Defence, Commerce and Finance and the Department of Science and Technology. It is these departments, or divisions which receive data and information, collate them and analyse their implications *vis-à-vis* India's external relations, security and defence. The function of these Regional and Territorial Divisions involves continuous updating, monitoring and interpreting international developments and trends relevant to Indian interests. Each of these divisions is headed by an officer with 18 to 23 years of experience, who is of the rank of a Joint Secretary. Inputs from these divisions are sent to the concerned

Secretary in the MEA, who, in turn, sends them on to the minister concerned with policy recommendations, which then go to the Prime Minister if necessary; otherwise the Minister for External Affairs takes the required decisions on these issues.

The organisation and the mechanism of the decision-making process described so far refer to the executive branch of the government. This does not complete the picture. As India is a democracy, with a parliamentary form of government, the legislature plays a significant role, backed up by the media and academic circles, in fashioning foreign policy. The Parliament, particularly the directly elected "House of the People" (the Lok Sabha) exercises financial and policy control on foreign relations. The demands for grants and the budget of the Ministry of External Affairs are examined in deliberations by the Parliament during the budget session, usually between the end of February and May every year. This scrutiny is not just financial but also political and functional. The occasion is used to subject the Treasury benches to a detailed inquiry on foreign policy matters. There is a question hour in Parliament every day, when it is in session, from 11 a.m. to 12 noon. Each week two days are allotted for questions to be asked by Members of Parliament on foreign affairs. There is no restriction on the subjects on which questions can be asked. The Foreign Minister and, when necessary, the Prime Minister, have to respond to these questions. There are also standard parliamentary devices to ensure government explanations and accountability on foreign policy decisions, namely, "calling attention motions", "short notice questions", "motion for a separate debate on any specific question or issue", and requests for policy statements or reports from the government on important international developments in which MPs may be interested. And there are adjournment and "no confidence" motions on critical foreign or defence policy issues. These devices focus on the supervision and accountability part of the conduct of India's external relations. There is the equally, if not more important, participatory role of the federal legislators in fashioning foreign policy. There are two

committees of Parliament each with approximately 50 members drawn from all parties which interact on a continuous basis with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Government of India on foreign policy matters. First, there is the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on External Affairs with the Foreign Minister as ex-officio Chairman. This committee usually meets once every three months to discuss issues of contemporary importance in foreign affairs. Civil servants from the Foreign Office headed by the Foreign Secretary of India are obliged to attend these meetings and respond to queries and comments from MPs, who are members of this committee. The agenda for each meeting is decided in advance by the Foreign Minister in consultation with the MPs. Also, suggestions on foreign policy issues and critical evaluation of foreign policy performance form a part of the deliberations of this committee. The MEA as well as the Government of India have to take note of suggestions made by this committee.

Secondly, there is (since 1992) a Standing Committee on External Affairs with representatives from both the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha and from all political parties. The Chairman of this committee is usually a senior Parliamentarian from one of the Opposition parties. This committee is at liberty to meet whenever it wants on the request of its members — at the discretion of the Chairman. The special feature of this committee is that no minister from the government is allowed to participate in its discussions. The committee has the right to call in any senior civil servant from the Foreign Office to appear before it to give testimony and provide explanations on issues which its members choose to discuss. The Foreign Secretary of India has to be always present at the hearings of this committee as the principal witness. The committee has full discretion to discuss any subject or issue. Its suggestions and criticisms are to be reported to the Government of India by the Chairman and the Foreign Secretary. The Ministry of External Affairs has to report back on follow-up action taken on the suggestions/ recommendations of this committee within time frames stipulated

by the Chairman. Reports of both the Consultative Committee and the Standing Committee constitute the basis for foreign policy debates in Parliament and for decisions taken by the Foreign Office and by the cabinet.

I am constrained to state that from 1992 to 1997, the Parliamentary Consultative Committee could not function effectively because there was really no Cabinet Minister for External Affairs (except for I.K. Gujral in 1996-97) in a position to devote focussed attention to the work of this committee. After Madhavsinh Solanki's departure as Minister for External Affairs in March 1992, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao had little time to preside over the meetings of the Consultative Committee though he was in charge of the ministry. Dinesh Singh succeeded Solanki, but the former's prolonged illness prevented him from chairing the committee meetings in any meaningful way. Another inadequacy which I noticed was that though specific agendas were set for each of the Consultative Committee meetings, Honourable Members of Parliament would exercise their sovereign status to depart from the agenda. After doing this, they would criticise the MEA for not providing documents and data for the subjects which they suddenly introduced for discussion. It should also be noted that there is no structured mechanism to monitor the extent to which the recommendations of the Consultative Committee are accepted or taken note of by the Ministry of External Affairs. The MEA's and the minister's accountability to the Consultative Committee nowadays seems to be proforma compared to the manner in which Prime Minister Nehru dealt with this committee or the seriousness which Sardar Swaran Singh and Narasimha Rao attached to the proceedings of this committee when they were Foreign Ministers. This state of affairs left me with an impression of such MPs not being interested in getting detailed information from the ministry or giving it detailed guidance.

In comparison, the newly formed Standing Committee seemed much more effective to me. Atal Behari Vajpayee as Chairman of the committee ensured its efficacy by keeping the

attention focussed on the predetermined agenda and structuring meetings in a manner in which there was sufficient time for discussion as well as for questions and answers. There were also certain members in both the Consultative and the Standing Committees who seldom went through the briefing papers or studied in detail the documents submitted to them by the MEA in conformity with the terms of the predetermined agenda. These members had their individual pet subjects and special "bees in their bonnet" about India's foreign policy; they would keep on repeating their statements in each of the meetings, regardless of whether what they were saying was relevant to the subject being discussed or not.

There are two other Parliamentary Committees which individually influence foreign policy formulations, namely, the Estimates Committee which scrutinises the budget, and the Public Accounts Committee, which carves out the post-expenditure functional and financial audit of the work of the Ministry of External Affairs.

In this era of information revolution and investigative journalism, media influence on foreign policy decisions need hardly be overemphasised. India can boast of a free press and an independent judiciary which have their own foreign policy orientations on issues of international concern such as human rights, the environment and nuclear non-proliferation.

A brief description of the origins of the Foreign Service and the trends which have marked the characteristics of this service over the last 50 years would be relevant. Jawaharlal Nehru was clear in his mind about the need for a professional and specialised Foreign Service to implement Indian foreign policy. He also acknowledged the role that members of the service could play in collating information and coming to deductive assessments, while he was confident about dealing with macro-level assessments of India's foreign relations. He drew on four sources to constitute the Indian Foreign Service: The senior echelons of the Ministry of External Affairs were initially manned by Indian officers of the British Indian Civil Service.

The second source was the middle level cadres of the former Foreign and Political Department of the British Government of India. The third source was the Indian armed forces. A number of Indian commissioned officers of British Indian Force (of the three branches: air force, navy and the army) were being demobilised by the end of the Second World War. He recruited a number of them, who had the inclination and the aptitude for diplomatic work, into the Foreign Service. The fourth source was senior academics, intellectuals, eminent citizens and some princes whom he mobilised to man senior positions in Indian diplomatic missions abroad. Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai, Sir N.R. Pillai, R.K. Nehru, Subimal Dutt and M.J. Desai, represented the first category. K.P.S. Menon, Hareshwar Dayal, B.K. Capoor and J.N. Dhamija, constituted the second category. Individuals like Jagat Mehta (who later was to become Foreign Secretary), Prithi Singh, S.K. Roy and Avtar Singh fell into the third category. Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Tara Chand, Dr. A Fyzee, Nawab Ali Yavar Jung, Maharao of Kutch and, later, the Maharaja of Jaipur represented the fourth category. This was the arrangement devised by Jawaharlal Nehru to meet the initial transitional needs of the Indian Foreign Service. He had, however, decided that India should have a Foreign Service whose recruitment should be based on merit. The selected individuals should be trained to become professionally competent and capable of manning the highest posts both at home and abroad. He therefore decided to constitute the Indian Foreign Service along with the other superior Civil Services of India such as the Indian Administrative Service, the Indian Police Service and the Indian Audit and Account Service. The first competitive examination was held in 1947, and the first batch of Foreign Service officers recruited on the basis of examinations went into training in 1948 along with the first batch of officers of the IAS.

Space does not permit a reference to training processes of the service and the manner in which it has adjusted to changes over the last 50 years. Suffice it to say that the following

transitions have characterised the Indian Foreign Service over this period. First, the Foreign Service, for want of a better description, has become democratised in terms of the social and educational backgrounds of individual members. The Foreign Service is becoming progressively representative of diverse parts of the country. The middle and lower middle classes and the less privileged sections of our society now have greater numbers in the service compared to the metropolitan, urban, foreign-educated individuals who constituted the initial batches of the Indian Foreign Service, representing the upper middle class in the social strata of Indian society. One is conscious that this is in some respects a sweeping generalisation but in terms of overall trends this assertion is fairly accurate. Secondly, India has become progressively more self-sufficient in training its Foreign Service officers in all respects. From 1970 onwards, the training facilities have been modernised and remarkably updated not only in general educational terms but also in terms of technological tools needed for such training (informatics, computers and so on). The third characteristic is a gradual realisation that there is need for regional as well as functional specialisation in the Indian Foreign Service. This need is reflected in both training programmes of, and posting patterns in, the Foreign Service. Though not completely satisfactory, the initiatives taken since the mid-1970s have been positive and they are being continued with multifaceted orientations. The fourth characteristic is a certain fall in the intellectual standards of the recruits not because there has been any general decline in the capacity of our young people but because the more able among them are attracted to other professions compared to the period up to about 1972-75, when the brightest were attracted to government service. The negative political and functional atmospherics of government work as well as financial reasons which have contributed to this process are well known and need not be dilated upon.

An interesting aspect of the ideological contradictions which affected the members of the Indian Foreign Service is worth

mentioning as there has been a general reticence about acknowledging or articulating them. From the beginnings of the service itself, there was the subconscious division between those members of the Foreign Service who were pro-West and those who were pro-socialist. It is equally interesting to note that the pro-West mindset characterised officials who had a close interaction with the British and were posted in Western Europe and North America. Those who had pro-socialist or anti-Western orientations were those who had to deal with countries such as China, Korea and the other socialist countries. Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai and Sir N.R. Pillai represented the first group, whose orientations were inherited by younger generations of officers who came under their influence or the influence of their senior subordinates. K.P.S. Menon, K.M. Pannicker and those recruited to the Foreign Service by V.K. Krishna Menon fell into the second group. Nehru's ideological orientations found a reflection in the manner in which he treated some of the senior members of the service in the first decade after independence. Given Panditji's expectations from the West he had officials of the first school of thought as his Principal Advisers. Both Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai and Sir N.R. Pillai were made Secretaries-General of the Ministry of External Affairs, while Nehru shifted K.P.S. Menon (who was free India's First Foreign Secretary) to Moscow as Ambassador, though Menon was more eligible to become Secretary-General of the ministry after Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai's retirement. As Nehru got disillusioned with the West by the second half of the 1950s, he started relying more on Foreign Service officials of the second persuasion. The two schools of thought remained more or less in competition to influence Indian foreign policy right up to 1980 when Mrs. Gandhi began her second tenure. But from 1983 onwards these undercurrents of ideological competition in the professional Foreign Service have faded away in tandem with the fading away of the Cold War and its coming to end in 1989-91.

India's experience in contemporary diplomacy is limited. The organisational and institutional back-up mechanisms have already

been summarised. Both procedures and the required infrastructural mechanisms are being gradually evolved on the basis of ongoing experience and experimentation.

Improvements have to be made and lacunae removed in India's foreign policy. It would be relevant to recount certain valid criticisms of the Indian's foreign policy decision-making processes as points of reference for enhancing the efficiency of the Indian Foreign Office:

(1) The Foreign Office works in an excessively secretive manner; there should be more transparency in its functioning methods.
(2) There is a lack of area specialisation, language specialisation and functional specialisation in the Foreign Office. Such specialisation becomes necessary in the context of the greater economic, technological and regional political contexts in which modern-day diplomacy is involved.
(3) The Foreign Service should become technologically up-to-date in utilising modern gadgets and instruments for gathering information, collating and analysing it, and formulating policy options. Information retrieval and data input techniques for policy formulations should be thoroughly modernised and updated.
(4) The training programme of the IFS officers at all levels should be recast to meet the aforementioned requirements.
(5) There should be no hesitation as far as lateral recruitment of specialists and technocrats into the IFS for specific purposes is concerned (as is being done in all other modern diplomatic services). Such recruitment need not be and should not be on a permanent basis. Such deployment should be function-specific and for specific periods at required levels of emoluments.
(6) Mid-service training programmes should be institutionalised and regularised instead of being organised on a voluntary basis.
(7) There should be more institutional arrangements (at a

greater frequency) for cross-fertilisation of views and ideas on foreign policy between the Foreign Office establishment on the one hand and the media and academic institutions specialised in foreign affairs on the other.

(8) Though fora and institutions exist for the coordination, assessment of views as well as for suggesting options among the Foreign Office, the defence organisations and the intelligence agencies of India, they tend to function in a compartmentalised ambience. Procedural and functional stipulations should be put in place to ensure continuous and effective coordination among all the agencies of the Government of India which are involved in foreign policy formulations.

(9) The Government of India, through various fora such as media seminars and discussions, Parliamentary debates and its other publicity agencies should be continuously involved in educating Indian public opinion on issues and challenges that the country faces in its external political and defence relationships and on the rational manner in which India is responding to these issues and challenges. This is the only method by which a national consensus and a united approach on foreign policy can be achieved.

(10) India should focus more attention on the economic and cultural aspects of the relations with other countries. The focus on political and strategic interests of India has, no doubt, very high importance, but some balance should be introduced in India's scheme of priorities *vis-à-vis* the aforementioned two aspects of foreign relations.

(11) New Delhi should make a more determined effort to mobilise non-resident Indian communities in those foreign countries where they are influential in order to further India's interests and influence abroad.

The Parliament, the Union Cabinet and, more specifically, the Ministry of External Affairs, are conscious of the aforementioned shortcomings and requirements. Gradual but continuous efforts

have been underway since the mid-1980s to make the Indian foreign affairs establishment responsive to the rapidly changing demands of international diplomacy and to make it an effective instrument to service India's interests into the twenty-first century. Constraints of resources and the imperatives of gathering public support for eliminating the foregoing drawbacks in a democracy are factors to be kept in mind if there is an inclination, off and on, to get impatient about some inadequacies in India's foreign policy operations both at home and abroad.

14

India's Foreign Policy: A Restrospective Evaluation

Having attempted panoramic survey of India's foreign policy, in country-specific and issue-specific terms, in a chronological sequence, it is time to step back from the canvas painted over half a century and view it critically; to evaluate the picture in terms of light and shade, hope and disillusionment and, above all, its overall impact. Did the people and the Government of India have the foreign policy objectives, which they had in mind at the time of independence, fulfilled? Did we succeed in redefining our objectives and interests and adjusting our foreign policy to meet inevitably changing circumstances? Could we have done better? Did we go wrong and, if so, why? This chapter is an attempt at such an evaluation; at answering these questions. A broad analysis of amorphous phenomena like the conception and implementation of a country's foreign policy cannot be structured too rigidly, issue-wise, country-wise or in terms of the major controversies affecting India's foreign relations over the last 50 years. I, therefore, choose a different approach in undertaking this evaluation.

First, one would analyse the predicaments and politico-historical trends which affected our foreign policy. Secondly, an assessment would be made of India's sense of collective self and its internal orientations. Thirdly, India's foreign policy would be looked at through the prism of perceptions about India and its attitudes and policies in the international community and, fourthly, an analysis would be attempted of successes and failures of India's foreign policy at the implementation or operational levels.

The great fourteenth-century scholar, Ibn Khaldun, while analysing the nature of historical forces, stated that the record of human society and of the transformations which it undergoes were primarily governed by its nature and historical inheritances. There is no better guiding concept which one can adopt to assess the predicaments in which India found itself at various points of time and which affected its foreign relations. The first and foremost was that India became a free country after about 190 years of British colonial rule. But at the emotional and subconscious levels, it was a freedom achieved after nearly a thousand years of being under rulers who considered themselves foreigners, even after having settled in India for centuries. Secondly, it was for the first time that India became part of the international community as a united subcontinental polity. The socio-cultural syncretic identity of India found geopolitical expression for the first time in the establishment of the Indian Republic. Thirdly, for the first time in recorded history, the state structures and governing institutions in the Indian society were based on contemporary principles of democracy. Government policies, therefore, for the first time, were to reflect the aspirations and interests of the broad mass of the Indian people. Maintenance of India's territorial integrity and independence, ensuring the well-being of the Indian people and resisting covert or overt acts at influencing India's policies against these interests were macro-level objectives emanating from the predicaments; these were objectives which had a national consensus behind them.

The geocultural environment around India and the resulting political trends affected India's external attitudes. The most impactful

factor was the partition of India, based on the two-nation theory, a theory which did not find expression in realities on the ground. Though Pakistan was created (in August 1947) on the advocacy that Muslims in the subcontinent were a separate nation and that Pakistan would be their home, more than one-third of the population of subcontinental Muslims stayed back in India. The creators of Pakistan were dissatisfied because they did not get those territories of the Indian subcontinent which they hoped to make a part of Pakistan. The mass migration of refugees between India and the newly created nation of Pakistan, in the aftermath of the partition, scarred the psyche of both India and Pakistan. The slaughter of Hindus by Muslims and vice versa reached mind-boggling dimensions. Pakistan's failure to acquire Kashmir and its futile attempts to establish linkages with the Nizam of Hyderabad left the new nation bitter and India suspicious and apprehensive about Pakistan's capacity to disrupt its (India's) unity and erode its territorial integrity. The seeds of antagonism and suspicion sown at the time of the partition have yielded a bitter harvest. The traumas of partition remain an active factor in India's relations with Pakistan, even today.

Leaving aside Pakistan, India had to cope with the two monarchies of Bhutan and Nepal. The king of Bhutan had little familiarity with the emerging leadership of free India. The Ranas of Nepal who dominated that country viewed democratic India with suspicion in the context of their (the Ranas') close relationship with the British imperial Government. Burma (as it was then known) and other countries of South-East Asia were in the process of either re-creating their new political identities in the aftermath of the Second World War or were engaged in freedom struggles against colonial powers, such as the British, the French and the Dutch. The asymmetry between the territorial sizes, population and resources of India and its immediate neighbours influenced the attitude of both India and these neighbours on intraregional relations. India's neighbours, particularly Pakistan, felt the need to create regional equations and an atmosphere against potential, real or imagined, Indian hegemonic tendencies. India, in turn, aimed at consolidating

its unity and, at the same time, establishing a pattern of relationships with its neighbours which would neutralise their apprehensions and encourage them to develop a cooperative and mutually beneficial equation with India. Further afield, India was supportive of freedom struggles against colonialism because it considered the achievement of freedom and liberty by all colonial peoples an integral part of the consolidation of free India as a nation. India also faced a China in turmoil which was moving towards a communist regime. A powerful Soviet Union disdainful and critical of India, under Stalin, also had to be reckoned with. Moreover, the USA's attitude towards India was shaped by the interpretations and assessments of the British colonial power. Britain took full advantage of the special relationship which it had with the USA to show India in an adverse light. This particular situation, in effect, contributed to Washington's more receptive and sympathetic attitude towards Pakistan and its assessment of India as an unpredictable and unmanageable factor in international politics. India had to cope with the contradictions between its idealistic and somewhat moral approach to international politics and the political realities affecting world affairs, especially in terms of the attitude of the major powers of the world towards India at the end of the Second World War. This was an attitude which was overwhelmingly influenced by emerging Cold War considerations. It should be remembered that these realities and contradictions had to be dealt with by India which had only limited experience in conducting foreign relations as a sovereign country. The Indian predicament was such that all countries under foreign rule viewed India as an example and an experiment on the basis of which they could and would fashion their politics.

In India's immediate neighbourhood, bitterness and animosities existed on the one hand and political uncertainties on the other. In terms of macro-level international equations, there was pressure on India to take sides in the Cold War and, at the same time, there was an indifference born of uncertain perceptions about India in the power centres of the world. Leaving these predicaments aside, India's perceptions about itself as a member of the international community and the role it envisaged for itself also impacted on its foreign policy.

India being the first among former colonies to become free and the unique non-violent nature and moral underpinnings of its freedom struggle (the distinct contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to the Indian political ethos) made the leaders feel that they had a special responsibility and a special role in contributing to the creation of a just and fair international order moving away from the determinants of power, economic resources and technological capacities which normally influenced international relations. The second perception, articulated by Nehru with profound conviction, was that India would play a leadership role in eliminating colonialism, economic exploitation and discrimination from world politics. The Asian Relations Conference, convened by Pandit Nehru in March 1947, was an expression of India translating this conceptual role into a concrete foreign policy event. Full support to the UN, a commitment to normative standards of international relations enshrined in the UN Charter and a passionate advocacy of disarmament and elimination of nuclear weapons were all consequences of this role perceived by India for itself. Another consequence was the self-assumed role that India envisaged for itself: the role of an interpreter of the aspirations of the countries of Africa and Asia moving towards independence. Furthermore, India was of the view that it could be the legitimate advocate in articulating socio-economic expectations and aspirations of the developing countries of the world. The presumption was that, in this process, India would play a catalytic role in forging unity among the developing countries of the world and would also achieve a prominent position in the international community not on the basis of military power or purely material resources but on the basis of its moral stature and its commitment to make moral principles a governing influence in international relations. This is the clear impression one gets from Nehru's statements on foreign policy during the first decade after independence and from the role that India played in supporting the freedom struggles of the countries of Asia and Africa and from the creation of multilateral fora such as the Afro-Asian Conference and the Non-aligned Movement.

Another ramification of India's self-perceptions about its role in international politics was its conviction that a just world order and

the interests of the majority of the countries of the world could be subserved only if the members of the international community desisted from getting themselves involved in the Cold War and competitive/confrontationist power equations. This approach entailed the moral content of rejecting competitive power politics and political realism that getting involved in power equations had no direct relevance to the concerns of the developing countries, and that such involvement would only subject such countries to irrelevant and extraneous influences which would affect the independence of their policies and freedom of options.

The foregoing approach had a direct relationship with Nehru's perception in that he felt that the acquisition of such freedom of options in the conduct of India's foreign and defence policies was imperative to safeguard the country's independence and sovereignty. The well-known political commentator, Sunil Khilnani, in his perceptive book, *The Idea of India*, confirms this view:

> For Nehru the authority of the new State (of India) rested not solely on domestic procedures of constitutional democracy but also establishing its sovereignty in the international arena. In his determination to secure India's sovereignty, he developed the idea of Non-alignment. The principles he initiated at the Bandung Conference of Non-aligned Nations in 1955 seem a faded and distant ideal now, but in the mid-50s, they were a radical departure from the obstinate polarities of the Cold War. There were a few stumbles in this doctrine of active neutrality, most notably, India's momentary hesitation about condemning the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. But in the main Nehru achieved outstanding successes, establishing India as a forceful and independent voice in international politics. This was a staggering performance for a poor country that had only recently emerged from colonial rule. At the core of Nehru's idea of Non-alignment was his conviction that Asia was finally taking charge of its own history as it emerged from the shadow of European domination. China and India were destined to be prime movers in this new phase in world history. It was with China

that he first outlined the Panch Shila, the five principles that he hoped would make Asia an area of peace.

It was this approach and this achievement that contributed to a collective sense of self-importance in India. Three other factors contributing to a feeling of self-esteem amongst Indians were: First, the adoption of a democratic Republican Constitution and the successful concretisation of the institutional infrastructure of the Indian polity within a short period of three years after achieving independence (by 1950). Second, the successful consolidation of India's territorial unity by merging of the majority of the Princely States of India into the Indian Union and the restructuring of states constituting the Indian Republic on ethno-linguistic lines (the reorganisation of Indian states). The third factor was the military self-confidence, engendered by the feeling that the Indian army was the inheritor of the capacities and efficiencies of the British Indian army which emerged victorious in many battles during the Second World War. The successful military operation against the tribal invasion backed by the Pakistani army in Kashmir and in the military campaigns in 1947 and 1948 enhanced this self-confidence. There was an unarticulated subconscious feeling that India was a regional power to be reckoned with.

How did the rest of world view India's predicaments and India's self-perceptions? And how did it react to the evolving trends in Indian foreign policy? The reaction of India's immediate neighbours was mixed: one of apprehension and resentment. Pakistan was of the view that having an adversarial confrontationist approach towards India was necessary for its self-preservation, for upholding the two-nation theory and for resisting any undoing of the partition. There were valid reasons for this attitude. India's police action in Hyderabad and statements by both Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad that partition was an aberration, which would be rectified in two decades or so, provided a sufficient basis for the aforementioned Pakistani reactions. Other countries such as Nepal and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) resented India's didactic and moral posturing on regional issues and international relations. The cultural, religious and linguistic

linkages of the peoples of these countries with India generated an apprehension that, with the departure of the colonial power, India's policies may evolve absorptive tendencies which would swamp the identities of these smaller countries. The developing countries of Asia and Africa, while appreciative of India's support to their cause in the initial stages, became sceptical and mildly resentful about repetitive claims of leadership role by India and India not being responsive to the sensitivities of the leadership in these countries. This reaction became more apparent during the Bandung Conference in 1955, when the Chinese and the Ceylonese Prime Ministers articulated scepticism about Nehru's leadership. The trend became even more pronounced after India's defeat in the Sino-Indian war of 1962.

India's assertive articulation of opposition to the Cold War and India's pioneering role in founding the Non-aligned Movement resulted in Western democracies, led by the US, viewing India sometimes with suspicion and sometimes with indifference. The socialist bloc countries, led by Stalin till 1953, viewed India as an ideologically ambiguous and politically irrelevant factor in international politics. China was an exception to this approach for a brief period from 1949 to 1956. Nehru's prompt recognition of the communist regime in China and his advocacy that China replace the Taiwan Government in the United Nations evoked a positive response from Beijing. Nehru's conceding China's claims on Tibet was an additional factor contributing to this response. But, by 1956, China's geostrategic ambitions and territorial claims against India commenced and an adversarial relationship developed between the two countries.

While the foregoing uncertainties and ambiguities characterising the perception of the major power centres of the world about India existed, India's non-involvement in the Cold War and its ability to sustain a principled approach to critical international developments accorded it a certain credibility and stature. Between 1950 and 1961 the role that India played during the Korean war, the Indo-China crisis, the Palestinian conflict and the civil war in Congo confirmed its status as an impartial and conciliatory arbiter while

dealing with major international crises. While this acknowledgment was there and India was allowed to play the role of a conciliator and a mediator, there was an undercurrent of criticism of India that while it was desirous of assistance and aid from various sources abroad, it was not willing to respond to this assistance by being supportive of the interests, attitudes and positions of those countries which gave India various categories of assistance.

It is in the context of these predicaments, self-perceptions and external perceptions that we proceed to an overall assessment of India's foreign policy, in episodic, event-specific and country-specific terms.

There is no doubt that, in broad terms, Indian foreign policy has met our country's basic national interests in their varied dimensions. The focus of attention in my assessment, however, would be on the contradictions which we suffered from and on a critical evaluation of whether India could have done better or whether India did not do what it could have done. Such an assessment would be flatly judgemental if it were not backed up by cogent reasons for why there were aberrations in Indian foreign relations and why Indian foreign policy in some respects was not what it should have been.

I have mentioned, in the preface to this book, the contradiction between the general moral orientation of India's foreign policy and the compulsions of realpolitik which disrupted this orientation. This contradiction led to dilemmas and failures in foreign relations throughout the half century and more of India's independence. Episodes and events concretising these dilemmas and failures are worth recalling. One of the first problems which India had to tackle in its relations with Pakistan was the apportionment of assets between the two newly created states including the foreign exchange balance and other assets, both in India and abroad. The correct approach should have been for the British to distribute these assets pro-rata to the successor states, based on their respective sizes and populations. They, however, deliberately left at short notice subjecting the process of distribution of assets to ambiguities which, in turn, resulted in all related issues being dealt with through a political approach and subject to prejudicial complexes. Both countries

accused each other of not being fair. Pakistan charged India with not releasing the sterling balance due to it (which upset Mahatma Gandhi a great deal). Some disputes remain unresolved even today such as the apportionment of the India Office archives and India Office library in England. India could have taken the initiative in suggesting precise and clear-cut terms of reference for distribution of assets in terms of the respective sizes of the two countries and in terms of different categories of assets relevant to the functioning of the new states.

The manner in which we dealt with the Kashmir issue, at the time of independence, fairly manifested the contradictions afflicting our policies. The moral elements in our Kashmir policy were that it was not the Maharaja of Kashmir but the people who should decide whether they wish to join India or Pakistan. Next, India maintained that it would not use any coercive means to make Jammu and Kashmir or any other Princely State join the Indian Union. The expectation was that the logic of geography, economic viability and cultural, linguistic and ethnic linkages would make the Princely States join either India or Pakistan.

On the contrary, the requirements or compulsions of realpolitik were that the British Government had decided that it would be the princes and the maharajas and not their people who would decide which dominion they would accede to — India or Pakistan. They were even given the choice of remaining independent if they wished to. (Travancore, Hyderabad, Indore and Junagadh tried to remain independent, but ultimately joined India due to overriding compulsions which included a military operation by India against Junagadh and Hyderabad.) The Maharaja of Kashmir indulged in ambiguities with the ultimate aim of remaining independent but Pakistan precipitated matters by organising the invasion of the kingdom by Pathan Lashkars in October 1947. The maharaja acceded to India under this pressure. His accession of Kashmir to India was generally supported by the more influential and popular National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir led by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. The maharaja's accession to the Indian Union met the constitutional and realpolitik requirements of India's independence. The support

given by the National Conference and Sheikh Abdullah to this accession provided the moral basis for this decision. So India moved in its troops to protect a Princely State which had become an integral part of Indian territory and the Indian Republic. Indian military intervention changed the nature of the conflict. As a consequence, the Pakistan army intervened in the area directly. India's military campaign was on the verge of being concluded successfully when Nehru's moral qualms and his idealism affected our foreign policy. He decided to take the issue to the United Nations. It would be pertinent to emphasise that *it was India and not Pakistan which took the Kashmir issue to the United Nations* in the expectation that the international body would uphold India's claims on the merits of the issue in constitutional, legal and political terms.

Lieutenant General Kulwant Singh, the officer commanding the Indian military forces in Jammu and Kashmir, pleaded with Nehru for just a few days more to complete the military operation and free the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistani presence. Nehru was advised by some senior cabinet colleagues not to proceed to the UN. But Lord Louis Mountbatten encouraged Nehru to do so. Firstly, the logic of Nehru proceeding to the UN was that this body, on the basis of its high moral responsibility, would deal with the issue *on the merits of the case*. Secondly, such a move would emphasise India's commitment to resolve international disputes by peaceful means. Thirdly, India's going to the United Nations, when it was poised for a military victory, would enhance its image as a country which did not wish to use military force to achieve its objectives. Nehru himself later realised that he was wrong in all these expectations. Interested powers transformed the very nature of the Kashmir issue through procedural gimmicks at the United Nations. Instead of the issues being discussed as a case of invasion by one member-state against territories of another state, it came to be discussed as a territorial dispute between two member-states, with Pakistan graduating to a position of a legitimate disputant from that of a crass invader which it was.

Nehru's agreeing to a plebiscite supervised by the UN in the initial stages of the discussion at the United Nations was again in

affirmation of his view that the people of Kashmir should be given an opportunity to express their views on the future status of their state. It was only in the mid-1950s that Nehru realised that a plebiscite could be manipulated by foreign powers to distort such a reference and that there were vested strategic interests of many countries leading them to work against Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India. Had Nehru listened to his military commanders and dealt with the Kashmir issue clinically in the context of realities on the ground at the time, instead of going to the United Nations, which proved to be a futile exercise, there would not have been a festering Kashmir dispute affecting Indo-Pakistan relations. Even more unfortunate developments were the Indian initiative resulting in the UN assuming jurisdiction over Kashmir and Pakistan utilising the UN resolutions of half a century ago to challenge today India's territorial integrity which has kept Indo-Pakistan relations tense during all these years. The issue of Jammu and Kashmir should have been dealt with in terms of its strategic implications and considerations of realpolitik instead of moral or idealistic expectations. This was the first of the flaws from which our foreign policy suffered.

Other instances, where India's foreign policy went wrong, pertain to the manner in which we reacted to the international crises which occurred in the mid-1950s. The first event was English-French and Israeli invasion of the Suez Canal after Egypt's President Abdul Gamel Nasser nationalised this canal. The second event was the Soviet military intervention in Hungary to counter the revolution by the people of that country. Our reaction to these events were briefly characterised by contradictions. We reacted to the invasion of Egypt by being firmly critical of the Governments of France, England and Israel for attacking a sister developing country. We adopted a high moral posture on the issue, generally describing the invasion as a revival of the colonial mindset and imperial military postures. In contrast, we temporised, we were ambiguous and were not critical of the Soviet Union for invading Hungary. The reason for this reaction was the newly established friendship with the Soviet Union and the potentialities that we discerned about Soviet defence,

technological and economic assistance to India. There was also acknowledgment that a strategic equation with the Soviet Union would enable India to resist the critical attitude of the US and Western democracies questioning India's Non-alignment and its refusal to join the Cold War, unlike Pakistan and many other countries in South-East Asia. It has to be remembered that the NATO had already been established and the CENTO and SEATO had come into being in the mid-1950s with a number of India's neighbouring countries participating in these military alliances. India's defence and economic needs, as well as geostrategic interests, necessitated a positive equation with the Soviet Union. It was therefore logical for India to avoid criticism of the Soviet Union. But then, was it necessary to be aggressively critical of the United Kingdom, France and Israel for their action against Egypt? Egypt's nationalising the Suez Canal certainly affected the vital interests of these countries. Also, there were reasons for President Nasser to nationalise the Suez Canal. Could we not have been equally clinical and temporising on the issue of the invasion of the Suez, keeping policy options open to deal with the situation as it developed? True, we pulled back from the formalistically neutral stand on the Hungarian issue later on and articulated measured criticism of the Soviet Union but the manifest contradictions in our policies at the initial stages of this conflict put us on the defensive in the international community.

The third event was the military action taken by India to free Goa from Portuguese colonial rule. Both the British and French colonial powers withdrew peacefully from India on the basis of political discussions. Antonio Salazar, the dictator of Portugal, however, was a different cup of tea, so to say. He could not reconcile himself to giving up Goa, Daman and Diu. India's attempts at negotiating a Portuguese withdrawal remained unsuccessful for 13 years after independence. By the fourteenth year, i.e., 1961, the freedom struggle in Indian territories under Portuguese control had reached a critical pitch where India had to give necessary support to push out the anachronistic Portuguese regime. While this was an immensely popular step with Indian public opinion, Nehru and India came in for much criticism by the Western democracies and at the

United Nations. The Indian move on Goa was objected to on grounds of international law, violation of the United Nations Charter, political morality and, over and above, as a contradiction of the five principles of peaceful co-existence which India itself had initiated as governing terms of reference of its foreign policy.

In retrospect, there can be no question that India was right in supporting the freedom struggle in Goa. The question to be answered is: why did India found itself in a predicament of being criticised by a large number of countries for this action? Before one answers this important question another case is worth mentioning, which can only be technically considered a foreign policy issue. This relates to the absorption of the small Princely State of Sikkim into the Indian Republic in 1975. Sikkim's status was different from that of Nepal and Bhutan during British times and in the aftermath of independence. Nepal and Bhutan were recognised as separate entities by the British Government, whereas Sikkim, under the agreements of 1890 and 1893, had accepted the status of a protectorate of the British Government of India. Also, the British Government had complete control over Sikkim's administration and foreign relations. The Chogyal of Sikkim was equivalent to the rulers of the smaller Princely States in other parts of India. By the Treaty of 1950, the Government of India resumed the responsibility of protecting Sikkim's identity and ensuring its security and welfare. To cut a long story short, the Chogyal married a lady from the United States, Miss Hope Cook, in the 1960s. One of the consequences was that the Chogyal tried to transform the status of Sikkim and to encourage extraneous foreign presence in his kingdom. He was also progressively alienated from the people of Sikkim who desired the state to become an integral part of the Indian Republic. So when political turmoil and disturbances reached a stage of unmanageable criticality, India stepped in, and, with the support of the people of Sikkim, took the necessary steps to integrate Sikkim into India. On strict moral and objective grounds, the action was dubbed as an "annexation", which could be considered valid if political processes could be clinically detached from political realities.

Now to answer the question posed with relation to Goa. The answer is very simple. India was hoist on its own petard. Indian foreign policy as articulated and projected by Pandit Nehru and by senior echelons of the Government of India was characterised by a lofty moral posture with streaks of pontification. We also claimed that we did not believe in the competitive nature of power equations in international politics, that we did not believe in the use of force to resolve any problem or achieve any objective and that we abjured political manoeuvrings to subserve our national interests. We further stressed that we firmly believed in principles of territorial integrity and unity of states, in non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and in scrupulous respect for the principles of international law. Our foreign policy articulators tended to be hectoring and didactic in their discussions with foreign leaders and statesmen. Nehru, however, was an exception. He was not hectoring or didactic, but was lofty and somewhat critical of the realistic and pragmatic political postures of his contemporaries in the world. When India acted in its self-interest decisively, using appropriate political and military means to meet such interests, it was criticised in the context of its own declared standards of international behaviour and principles of foreign policy. It is also my view that we should have pushed out the Portuguese from Goa in the late 1940s or 1950s, without waiting till 1961. We should also have organised the accession of Sikkim to India along with the other Princely States. We would then not have faced the later avoidable controversies and criticisms.

The most serious political and foreign policy débâcle which India suffered during the Nehru era was the Indian army being defeated by the Chinese armed forces in the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962. The conflict arose out of the boundary dispute between India and China. The dispute originated because the Chinese questioned the validity of the Sino-Indian boundary as generally demarcated during the British colonial period. Much has been written over the last few decades about the Sino-Indian boundary dispute, the subsequent military clash between the two countries and the humiliation of India. One cannot possibly add more in terms of facts

or political analysis about the event and what led to this débâcle. Nevertheless, a focussed brief critique of the attitudes and political perceptions which resulted in this enormous failure in foreign relations would be pertinent. China's boundary claims and its military successes between 1956 and 1962 against India have been described in somewhat hyperbolical terms as "a great betrayal", "the Himalayan blunder" and so on. We now have the benefit of hindsight and capacity for perspective, in terms of the passage of three decades or more since this critical development. What follows is a personal postmortem. I was one of the two Desk Officers in charge of India's relations with China between 1961 and 1963 when the Sino-Indian controversy reached a high pitch culminating in war. Twenty-nine years later I was the Foreign Secretary and initiated and finalised the Sino-Indian Agreement on maintenance of peace and tranquillity on the line of actual control, a line which came into being *after* the Chinese declared a unilateral ceasefire and withdrew at the end of Sino-Indian conflict in November 1962. I, therefore, have personal insights about what I am about to disclose.

I have touched upon Sino-Indian relations in earlier chapters of this book. The objective here is to ruminate on whether we could have structured our relations with China in some alternative way which would have avoided the boundary dispute, our military humiliation and also the present inequilibrium in military capacities between India and China. It must be stated in the beginning itself that the tendency in some segments of Indian opinion makers to lament the Chinese not reciprocating the positive overtures which India made towards Beijing after Mao Tse-tung came to power has no relevance in a logical and realistic foreign policy. The simple fact to be acknowledged in retrospect is that Mao Tse-tung and Chou-en Lai did not quite share Pandit Nehru's vision of a great era of Asian cooperation being structured on the basis of Sino-Indian friendship. The Chinese were hard-nosed and focussed on their territorial aspirations and strategic interests. They firmly believed, and still believe, that their destiny is to be the most important Asian power and to become one of the great powers of the world, regareless of their claims of "non-ambition" off and on.This

perception was in total contrast to the Indian policies of what I would call "emotional positivism" towards China.

The first occasion when we could have negotiated a realistic deal with China was when Nehru acquiesced with the Chinese resuming their suzerainty and jurisdiction over Tibet. We could have told the Chinese that, in return for our accepting their resumption of authority over Tibet, they should confirm the delineation of the Sino-Indian boundary as inherited by them and us from the British period. We could have and should have demanded the *quid pro quo* of their not questioning the delineated boundary of British times and asked them not to revive any of their tenuous claims on what was Indian territory. We did not utilise the opportunity of our agreeing to China resuming authority in Tibet to safeguard our territorial interests.

The second point of regret is that we did not take a firmer stance against the Chinese early enough when signals were discerned about their territorial ambitions. The first protest note which India delivered to China on discovering that the Chinese were constructing a road in Aksai Chin did not point out in categorical terms that the Chinese had intruded into Indian territory. We indulged in unnecessary undulations and sophistry by pointing out that there were certain Chinese personnel seen on what was Indian territory without proper travel documents and visa endorsements. We should perhaps have assertively questioned Beijing showing portions of Indian territory as parts of China in Chinese maps and should perhaps have been more firm in cautioning China against these attempts at cartographic erosion of India's territorial integrity. Our approach on these vital issues remained polite and diplomatically correct at all levels right up to 1958-59 when the frequency of Chinese border patrols intruding into Indian territory increased and when clashes started occurring between Indian border security forces and their Chinese counterparts. Our approach, which was marked by caution and politeness, contributed to the Chinese consolidating their position on the ground and their political conviction that they could deal with any Indian challenge.

The third lacuna in our policy regarding China at that point of time was our not perceiving that country as a source of political challenge or territorial threat. Our threat perceptions were entirely

focussed on Pakistan and our political apprehensions were the result of what strategies the USA would chalk out as a fallout of the Cold War, rather than being related to the emerging geostrategic realities or Chinese policies in the South Asian region. In addition, these aberrations in our foreign policy raise the question whether we could have dealt with the boundary problem in a different manner in negotiations with China between 1956 and 1961? Could we have avoided the military conflict of October 1962 which led to our defeat and a major erosion of our political credibility in the international community? In the several rounds of bilateral negotiations held in the late 1950s and till 1961, the main Chinese argument was that they did not recognise as valid the boundaries drawn between subcontinental India and China by the colonial British Government. The general claim was that Tibet, large tracts of India's North-Eastern territories and the border territories stretching from the foothills of the Himalayas (from Bhutan to Ladakh) belonged to China or were under general Chinese suzerainty before the British came on the scene to dominate the subcontinent and took advantage of a weakened and disunited China. In response, the broad Indian argument was that the Chinese claims to suzerainty over border areas, which now fell under India on the basis of history, were not valid or factually accurate. (The Indian side pointed out that the Chinese claims to suzerainty had no substance or basis for at least 300 to 400 years before the British advent to power in India in the late eighteenth century onwards.) Secondly, the boundary as delineated by the British (the MacMahon Line) and other segments of the Indian boundary delineated by British cartographers were also valid in terms of geographical principles governing demarcation of boundaries between states in mountainous areas and hilly terrain.

In terms of arguments based on history and of those based on the political approach, at the negotiations, both the Indian and Chinese stances were flawed. Chinese historical claims were (and are) exaggerated. Their political approach was rigid and unimaginative. The Indian negotiating stance had the same flaw with one addition. On a point of cartographic technicality, the Indian side was less than accurate. This point was reflected in the fact that the official

note drafted by MacMahon describing the delineation of the boundary between India and Tibet and portions of China did not match the map which he and his assistants had drawn as an annexure to this note. The next question is whether the military conflict could have been avoided? There is no doubt that the Chinese patrolling activities were becoming increasingly provocative. There was a need to militarily resist the moves by the Chinese. The conflict could perhaps have been avoided if Nehru, on the advice of General B.M. Kaul, had not ordered an all-out general offensive against the Chinese forward posts and military positions all along the disputed border. Panditji was given this advice on the basis of misplaced sense of India's military strengths and superiority from which certain sections of the officer cadre of the Indian army suffered. There was also the feeling amongst some of the senior army officers that China would not react very strongly to India pushing back the Chinese forward positions and posts. Had our military response to Chinese forward military postures on our border been selective, gradual and area-specific, we could have avoided the general conflict. More importantly, the general conflict could have been avoided had not the general directive for military operations against China emanated from the highest political level in India, from Pandit Nehru himself. Another point mentioned to me by my military colleagues is that even as we were being defeated, India's approach lacked drive and imagination. We were inexplicably reticent and cautious. I am not going into details of lack of preparation, lack of equipment and inadequate logistical back-up which characterised the Indian military moves against Chinese posts. The reticence and caution which I am talking about refer to India not deploying its air power against the Chinese troops whose supply lines were stretched thin and who at that point of time could not really bank on any effective air support from Tibet.

There is a point of view that, by 1962, China had developed certain missile capacities but there is the other view that these capacities were not strategically or tactically deployed at that point of time to deal with the conflict on the Sino-Indian border. Only knowledgeable experts can answer these questions. But the use of

air power perhaps would have avoided the military defeat which we suffered.

Another crucial development which we did not quite take notice of from 1959 onwards was the growing strategic nexus and political relationship between Pakistan and China, a phenomenon which was structured on the initiative of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto backed by President Ayub Khan. Bhutto, despite all the aberrations of his personality, had a certain competitive strategic vision about strengthening Pakistan *vis-à-vis* India, by forging connections with China and other Islamic countries. The short-term denouncement of this equation was Pakistan ceding a large tract of the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir to China in 1962 (which was under occupation by Pakistan ever since the conflict of 1948 against India).

The last point of rumination which occurs to me is whether we could have and whether we can adopt a more practical approach in resolving the Sino-Indian boundary dispute. First of all, my view is that instead of resorting to historical, emotional and purely technical arguments with the Chinese during future Sino-Indian boundary talks, we should take the stand that both sides should adopt a practical and flexible approach. Secondly, our view should be that the settlement of the boundary question has to be an exercise in mutual compromises, responsive to the more important territorial and strategic interests of both countries. Thirdly, we should have partially accepted the Chinese argument that the boundary delineated during the colonial period need not be insisted upon. We should have demanded in return that China give up its spurious historical claims of having had effective jurisdiction over areas of Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh and the central sections of the Indo-Tibetan border. We could agree to stop describing our boundary as the MacMahon Line. We should have just said that there is a certain boundary delineated from the mid-19th century onwards and that it provides the basis for negotiations. We could suggest to the Chinese that the boundary could be delineated by a methodology that would be responsive to the mutual concerns of both countries, and on the basis of latest cartographical and geographical principles for boundary delineation in mountainous terrain, as acknowledged by

international law. We did not do this in 1962 but we have prepared the ground for some such approach by signing the agreement with China in September 1993 for the maintenance of peace and tranquillity on the line of actual control. This agreement stipulates the maintenance of normalcy and military disengagement between India and China all along the line of actual control. As this agreement gets implemented, India and China could engage in a gradual discussion to delineate the Sino-Indian boundary on the basis of the general approach described above. But the process has to be preceded by educating public opinion, both in China and India, for forging a general consensus for adopting such a rational and practical approach to resolve this complex and emotionally charged problem. As far as this dispute remains unresolved, complete normalisation of Sino-Indian relations will be difficult.

Another inadequate geostrategic response to the evolving adversarial security environment around India occurred during the early 1960s. The period between 1950 and 1969 was characterised by high intensities in the Cold War. This was also the period when the Western system of military alliances, though structured essentially against the Soviet Union and China, developed undercurrents which posed challenges to Indian security because of Pakistan's involvement in the SEATO and CENTO and also because of India's commitment to Non-alignment combined with its expanding relations with the Soviet Union and its allies. The deployment of American forces around the South Asian region had already taken place. Both the Soviet Union and China were engaged in taking countermeasures against this situation. It was against this background that China exploded its first nuclear weapons device in the early winter of 1964. The Americans certainly viewed this development as a threat and they indicated to India that they would be generally supportive of India becoming a nuclear weapons power. The Americans had some advance information about China's nuclear weaponisation plans. They had therefore given the above indications to Dr. Homi Bhabha late in 1963 or early in 1964. Pandit Nehru refused to make India a nuclear weapons power, emphasising his commitment to a stand against weapons of mass destruction of all categories. It would

be a valid speculative analysis that had India decided to become a nuclear weapons power at that time, the Soviet Union would also not have objected because by late 1962 and in 1963, Soviet-Chinese alienation had become public and overt in international power equations. India could have become a nuclear weapons power without arousing international criticism or indictment in the mid-1960s. There was sufficient justification for India to acquire this capacity, both in terms of technological and security requirements. We lost a valuable opportunity of transmuting our capacities into operational reality which would have had a long-term positive impact on our position in the international community and on our own geostrategic interests. Had we exercised the nuclear weaponisation option in the early 1960s, we would have been able to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty as a nuclear weapons power, instead of getting enmeshed in all the controversies and the isolation which we have gone through from 1966-68 onwards.

Kashmir has been a festering wound which has greatly affected our foreign and defence policies through all these five decades since our achieving independence. We have repeatedly failed in responding to the opportunities which came our way for resolving this problem permanently and in a definitive manner. The Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971 are cases in point. India was successful in completely neutralising the Pakistani infiltration and invasion of Kashmir in 1965. Lal Bahadur Shastri's proceeding to Tashkent under pressure from the Soviet Union was necessary and unavoidable, given India's technological and defence dependence on the Soviet Union and, to some extent, on the USA at that time. But we should have utilised the Tashkent meeting to put in place a solution to the territorial dispute on Kashmir underwritten by the Soviet Union and the Americans. I advisedly mention the Americans also because Kosygin's initiative had the endorsement of the United States Government. We should have agreed to the ceasefire and other provisions for restoring peace subject to Pakistan accepting the realities on the ground in Jammu and Kashmir and acknowledging them as the basis for a permanent solution. Not only did we agree to a framework of peace in which the Kashmir dispute remained

alive and debatable but we also gave up positions of tactical and strategic advantage in Jammu and Kashmir which we had gained during the military operations of 1965. The Indian armed forces establishment still views with resentment their having had to vacate the Haji Pir Pass and a few other such points of terrain. We did not take advantage of our successful military performance against an unprovoked military invasion, translating our military successes into foreign policy gains. Somehow the spirit and drive which made Shastriji decide to attack Pakistan across the international borders to make that country's forces pull back from Jammu and Kashmir were eroded when we went to Tashkent. The argument that there was international pressure on the issue is only valid up to a point. India could have legitimately argued that it had agreed to a ceasefire, that it had come to the trilateral conference for peace with Pakistan despite the latter's repetitive military and subversive activities against India, and demanded the *quid pro quo* that Pakistan should come to terms with the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India which was in conformity with the constitutional provisions governing the partition of India and the grant of independence and dominion status to India and Pakistan. The Indian stance could have had the further element of moderation in demands in that India could have asserted that Pakistan could retain what it had illegally occupied, provided it did not question the jurisdiction of India on territories of the state of Jammu and Kashmir which had legally acceded to India and which were under Indian control. This would have been the minimalist, reasonable demand and if Pakistan rejected it, India could have told the Soviet Union and the US to generate pressure on Pakistan to accept this stand. Even if there was some arm-twisting by Kosygin and limitations on the part of Field Marshal Ayub Khan, India could have given a signal that it had adopted a clear and decisive posture on the question of Kashmir.

The aftermath of the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war related to the East Pakistan crisis revealed the repetition of the same story. India was in a greater position of negotiating strength than ever before *vis-à-vis* Pakistan during the Shimla Summit in July 1972. India had about 90,000 Pakistani soldiers as prisoners of war. India was in

the occupation of Pakistani territory in Sindh and southern Punjab. It was obvious that giving back territory and returning the prisoners of war was a practical and wise approach. It was politically, economically and psychologically the correct approach to restabilise Indo-Pakistan relations. But India could have insisted on a durable settlement of the Kashmir issue in return for returning the POWs and vacating Pakistani territory.

Despite obfuscations and denials indulged in by members of the Pakistani power structure of that time, the fact of the matter is that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had agreed to convert the line of actual control into an international border between India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir. He assured Mrs. Indira Gandhi that he would work for a permanent settlement of the dispute on this basis, but pleaded that he did not wish this assurance on his part to be incorporated into the formal document of the Shimla Agreement. He argued that his giving this concession formally and immediately would make his position untenable and that there would be a revival of extremist Islamic military rule in Pakistan. Mrs. Gandhi and her advisers responded to these pleadings positively on holistic and normative grounds and perhaps keeping in mind the abiding lesson of history that imposed and dictated agreements do not last and that such agreements contain the seeds of further confrontation. This approach is valid up to a limited point. Regardless of whether India took a moderate, accommodative posture or a demanding one, Pakistan's adversarial attitude was not likely to change. In the circumstances, India ensuring a formal confirmation of the assurance given by Bhutto in the Shimla Agreement would have at least provided a political and legal basis for preventing Pakistan from agitating the Kashmir issue as it has been doing in the 1980s and 1990s. The Shimla Agreement, in effect, allowed the Kashmir issue to be kept alive with India acknowledging that it is a dispute still to be settled. This Indian stand *vis-à-vis* Pakistan is also in profound contradiction of the basic Indian position that the status of Jammu and Kashmir is not debatable and that in terms of the India Independence Act and subsequent political and constitutional developments, J&K is an integral part of India. Had the position

that the line of actual control would be a dividing frontier between Pakistan and India been formalised, it would not only have been a political compromise but it would also have been interpreted as a concession on the part of India in constitutional and legal terms as envisaged in the India Independence Act and the Instrument of Accession signed by the Maharaja of Kashmir in October 1947.

A vital question requiring an answer in parantheses is whether India was right in supporting the liberation struggle of Bangladesh. There were strategic, ethno-linguistic and political compulsions which made India support this liberation struggle. Those who have argued that India should not have been a party to the break-up of a neighbouring country predicate their assessment on the presumption that India had hoped for a very warm and close friendly equation with Bangladesh, in reciprocity for helping that country achieve independence. This presumption is only partially accurate. India was simply responding to the pressures generated by a massive freedom struggle which, if ignored, would have had a fallout on West Bengal and the North-Eastern states of India demographically, economically and in ethno-linguistic terms. An equally pertinent counter-question to be posed to the critics of India's Bangladesh policy at that point of time is whether India could be held responsible in any way for the discriminatory and insensitive treatment to which East Pakistanis were subjected to by the regimes and political leaders of West Pakistan. Another equally relevant question to be answered would be whether, with the passage of time, the people of Bangladesh have any inclination to rejoin Pakistan. The answer to both these questions is likely to be negative and, if this is so, the logic of Mrs. Gandhi's policies on the East Pakistan crisis stands endorsed.

I have earlier in this chapter as well as in an earlier chapter on non-proliferation and disarmament mentioned inhibitions and reticences which have afflicted our policies on the nuclear weaponisation of our country. Our not capitalising on the successful implosion which we conducted at Pokhran in 1974 and systematically moving towards becoming a nuclear weapons state have been major shortcomings in our national security and foreign policies. Such

shortcomings have adversely affected our strategic position *vis-à-vis* Pakistan and China. They have weakened our negotiating position on the new arrangements being discussed and put in place for nuclear non-proliferation such as the CTBT and FMCT. In retrospect, they have also affected our position on the indefinite extension of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Reticences and calibrated ambiguities which were tactical ingredients of our nuclear policies have now become the entire policy itself. Fashioning a credible nuclear and missle development programme is one of the major challenges that India's foreign and defence policies would face as we move towards the twenty-first century. We have to fashion this policy without entering into a confrontation with the nuclear weapons powers, while, at the same time, safeguarding our technological and strategic options. This is going to be a very complex and difficult exercise in the coming years. The objective which I have mentioned is more or less undebatable. The problem is regarding methods that India should adopt at the political and technological levels to meet this objective. We have taken a step to partially resolve this dilemma by conducting the nuclear and thermonuclear tests in May 1998. We still have to tackle the political and strategic fallout of this important decision. This aspect would be discussed in one of the concluding chapters of this book.

India's policy stances on the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, and the Iraq-Iran war, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent Gulf War have been assessed with the benefit of hindsight in the chronological analysis in different chapters. Here, I present a recapitulation. The rationale of India's Afghan policy during the Soviet occupation has already been discussed earlier. The logic of India's policies till the Soviets remained in Afghanistan was based on considerations of realpolitik in terms of our bilateral predicaments with Pakistan and marginal ideological orientations aimed at the well-being and modernisation of Afghan society. The point on which India's foreign policy became stilted and perhaps lacked dynamism was in dealing with Afghan developments once Mikhail Gorbachev decided to withdraw the Soviet troops from that country. While India endeavoured to maintain

contacts with the emerging but fragmented Afghan leadership in the post-Soviet period, we perhaps made a mistake of relying too much on contacts with the pro-Western, semi-feudal elite leadership of Afghanistan. Such a leadership could not play any role in the critical developments in Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal. We also failed in giving effective support to the Government of Najibullah who seriously attempted to move away from his Soviet connections to emerge as a leader with an Afghan national identity. We gave him general political support but our material assistance to him was less than adequate. While it was true that we could not expect Pakistan to function in cooperation with us to stabilise Afghanistan, we did not try to forge an effective link on the Afghan question with Iran, with Turkey or even with the USSR to develop a joint strategy to resist the forces of ethnic and religious extremism in Afghanistan. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao made an attempt to remedy the situation between 1991 and 1996. His attempt resulted in some positive development in Indo-Afghan relations and in political understandings with Iran and Turkey. But these initiatives came perhaps a little too late. A fragmented Afghanistan creates tensions in our North-Western states and also remains a hurdle in our contacts with the Central Asian Republics.

Post-1996, India has paid only episodic attention to Afghanistan and Central Asia, a region which is of utmost strategic and economic importance to us. India's involvement in, and reaction to, the Iran-Iraq war in the decade of 1980s and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 leave one bemused. India had assumed the chairmanship of the Non-aligned Movement in 1983. Mrs. Gandhi's approach to the Iraq-Iran conflict was measured and impartial. She did not envisage any direct mediatory role for India in resolving the conflict. As Chairperson of the Non-aligned Movement, of which Iran and Iraq were members, she accepted the responsibility of urging a ceasefire and compromise between these two Islamic countries. The then Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao was of the same view but the Foreign Minister of Cuba, M. Malmierca whose country chaired NAM before Mrs. Gandhi took over, was unrealistically enthusiastic about a mediatory role in the Iran-Iraq war. He somehow persuaded

the then Senior Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, Romesh Bhandari, who specialised in India's relations with the Gulf and West Asia, to get India involved in this mediatory effort. There was much shuttle diplomacy by Malmierca, Narasimha Rao and Romesh Bhandari, thanks to an aircraft donated by the Soviet Union. It was a futile diplomatic exercise which antagonised Iran against India and which did not yield any dividends for India from Iraq except Iraq's formal declarations supporting India on the Kashmir issue. The fact of the matter was that India had substantive interests in having good relations with both Iran and Iraq. We should have avoided getting involved in a mediatory effort when other such efforts by important Muslim countries were already proving to be a failure. There were rumours that the Cuban Foreign Minister had hoped that the Non-aligned Movement may get the Nobel Prize for peace if the mediatory effort succeeded. Both Mrs. Gandhi and Narasimha Rao were rightly sceptical about this aspiration but they went along for the cosmetic purpose of activating a Non-aligned initiative. The initiative in itself remained a foreign policy exercise without any concrete results.

V.P. Singh was the Prime Minister and I.K. Gujral the Foreign Minister of India when Iraq invaded Kuwait. Here also, both in cosmetic and substantive political terms, India reacted in a confused and ambiguous manner. We should have acknowledged the fact that Saddam Hussain had invaded Kuwait. We should have urged Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and sought a peaceful solution under the aegis of the United Nations, OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) or any other multilateral Arab forum.

At the cosmetic level, Gujral's being photographed embracing Saddam Hussain, when he visited Iraq in the middle of the invasion, conveyed negative impressions about India throughout the Gulf and in the international community. At the substantive political level, our government advising the Indian community in Kuwait to cooperate with the invading Iraqi authorities was incorrect and created a distorted image of India among the countries of the Gulf which lasted till the mid-1990s. In the beginning stages of the discussions at the United Nations Security Council on the Iraq-Kuwait issue,

we took a vacillating and ambiguous stand till the unanimity of international opinion persuaded us to go along with the United Nations' Resolutions. Indian policies fell short of moral principles and political adroitness in dealing with this critical development. A relevant footnote to these trends in our foreign policy is that during Gujral's tenure as Foreign Minister and later as Prime Minister in 1996 and 1997, there was not a single occasion where he was invited to any of the countries of the Gulf with whom we have substantive and mutlifaceted relations. The sustained and purposeful action to remove misunderstandings between the countries of the Gulf and India undertaken by the Narasimha Rao Government between 1991 and 1996 succeeded in improving India's relations with the countries of the Gulf to some extent. But the scars left behind by India's foreign policy stances on these relations between December 1989 and December 1990 still remain.

Another issue related to the Gulf war which has been a matter of public debate and controversy was the decision by India to allow refuelling facilities to American aircraft involved in combat operations (during Chandra Shekhar's stint as Prime Minister). There has been much ado about India diluting its Non-aligned and neutral position by having allowed this facility to the USA. One has to analyse this decision in terms of India's interests and compulsions. It has to be kept in mind that not only the Indian civil aviation flights but also Indian Air Force planes proceeding to the Soviet Union, France and England had to overfly the Gulf countries. Indian Air Force aircraft particularly need technical stops and refuelling facilities in the Gulf countries which were unanimous in their resentment and opposition to Saddam Hussain's invasion. If we had refused refuelling facilities to US planes involved in Gulf operations, which technically were UN operations and which also had full endorsement of the Gulf countries, these countries could have withdrawn facilities being extended to Air India as well as to Indian Air Force planes in terms of overflying their airspace and providing technical and refuelling stopovers. This would have been apart from jeopardising the large-scale economic and commercial interests which India had in the countries of the Gulf.

One can conclude that indulging in magisterial criticism based on abstractions of ideology about such decisions shows a lack of realism and a lack of awareness about Indian interests. It does not make for practical foreign policy.

From June 1991 to end-1997, Narasimha Rao and I.K. Gujral stood out as the dominant influences on India's foreign policy. The period from December 1989 to May 1991, apart from being characterised by our ineptitudes in relation to the Gulf War, was also marked by our neglecting relations with the United States, the Russian Federation and China. The V.P. Singh Government could not come to grips with emerging transformations in international relations. Nor could it initiate processes of foreign policy adjustments which would have enabled us to deal with the break-up of the Soviet Union and its ramifications in a more structured manner. Both Singh and Gujral (as the Foreign Minister) failed singularly in analysing the implications of Gorbachev's domestic policies and the pattern of changing strategic and power equations which characterised US-Soviet relations between 1989 and 1991. India also stood marginalised at the United Nations and in other multilateral fora. Compounding all these setbacks was the qualitative deterioration in Indo-Pakistan relations manifested in the confidence with which Pakistan revived its interventionist terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir. The V.P. Singh Government's panicky and precipitate surrender to Kashmiri terrorists to get the then Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's daughter released from their clutches conveyed the impression of India being vulnerable and not having the grit and confidence to counter Pakistani intervention. The result was a steady escalation of terrorist activities against India in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and revival of the Kashmir issue as a dispute through diplomatic and publicity efforts by the Government of Pakistan in different mutlilateral fora.

It was only when Chandra Shekhar took over the reins of power as the Prime Minister of India and sent out signals of India's inclination to react decisively and with strength against the Pakistani moves that some stability was restored in Indo-Pakistan relations. In fact, Chandra Shekhar's discussion with Nawaz Sharif in Male,

in early 1991, had a salutary effect on Pakistan's militantly assertive attitude on the Kashmir issue. Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar clearly expressed his views that while he was committed to normal and peaceful relations with Pakistan, India would not tolerate separatist terrorism, if Pakistan did not cease its nefarious activities in Jammu and Kashmir..

Significant foreign policy aberrations—I would not call them "failures"—during Narasimha Rao's five-year tenure as Prime Minister (from 1991 to 1996) were in the initial handling of the political uncertainties within the Soviet Union, the pulling back from a practical and measured approach on nuclear non-proliferation issues *vis-à-vis* the United States of America in mid-1994 and failing to take follow-up action on the initiatives which he himself had taken in developing relations with Central Asia between 1991 and 1993. The temporary mishandling of political uncertainties in the Soviet Union was reflected in two events. The first was Narasimha Rao's reaction to the attempted and failed coup against the Gorbachev regime on 19 August 1991. Relying more on the somewhat slanted assessments of our diplomatic mission in Moscow than on the assessments given to him by the headquarters at the Ministry of External Affairs and our intelligence agencies, he thought that old style communism would redominate the Russian state structure. He therefore issued a statement criticising Gorbachev and the liberal forces at work in the Soviet Union for having undertaken transformations too fast and in a precipitate manner and went on to deliver an implied assessment that the coup led by the communist hardliners may bring back stability to the Soviet Government. This statement was based on an inaccurate assessment of facts as well as on wrong prognosis. Later information indicated that Gorbachev might have been a party himself to the attempted coup to neutralise the forces led by Boris Yeltsin. Also, the prognosis that the communists might come back to power also proved to be wrong. Quite the reverse happened. Yeltsin came to power instead.

The second event or incident was that our foreign policy establishment did not anticipate the disintegration of the Soviet Union almost till September-October 1991, that is, two months away from

the actual break-up of the state structure. By November, however, there were clear indications of a fragmentation of the Soviet Union. Yeltsin was seeking international credibility and acknowledgement at that point of time. The Foreign Minister Madhavsinh Solanki and Foreign Secretary Muchkund Dubey visited Moscow towards end-October and beginning November 1991. Yeltsin indicated a desire to visit India, underlining that given the close relations between the Soviet Union and India in the past and given his anticipation that Indo-Russian relations could be on the same footing, he wanted India to be the first country that he visited. Our response to his suggestion was inhibited and reluctant. Instead of contacting New Delhi straightaway, and getting Narasimha Rao's positive response to Yeltsin's request, Solanki conveyed that he would return to Delhi and then indicate the Indian response. I had taken over as Foreign Secretary-designate in the Ministry of External Affairs on 15 November. It was my clear assessment that we should respond positively to Yeltsin's request as, in my assessment, he was likely to emerge as a dominant political force in the new Russia. When I broached the subject with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, his response was that while my assessment may be right, he did not want Yeltsin to use a visit to India to win international credibility as he had not still been fully acknowledged by other important powers in the world. Eventually, after a week's persistence with the Prime Minister, I persuaded him to invite Yeltsin to visit India in January 1992. In fact, this decision was accompanied by minor theatrics. Narasimha Rao was due to fly to France then on to Caracas, Venezuela, to attend a G-15 summit meeting on 26 November 1991. He ultimately agreed to send the invitation to Yeltsin during the flight from Delhi to Paris. This message was transmitted to our Ambassador in Moscow in mid-flight, between Delhi and Paris. But by then we were too late. Yeltsin had already received invitations from some West European countries as well as the United States. He, therefore, explained his inability to visit Delhi in December 1991 or January 1992 as he had originally planned. His visit was delayed by nearly a year and two months. He visited New Delhi only in January 1993. Our delayed and inhibited response to his initial enthusiasm for India certainly created some distances between

India and Russia for about 18 months. These distances I must emphasise were apart from the inherent Euro-centric and pro-Western orientation which characterised Russian foreign policy during the period when Andrei Kozyrev was the Foreign Minister and Principal Adviser to Yeltsin. Matters improved only after Yevgeny Primakov took over as the Foreign Minister.

I have detailed the discussions on non-proliferation issues between Narasimha Rao and President George Bush early in 1992 in an earlier chapter. We had adopted a very sober and measured negotiating stance on the issue which was that we were willing to enter into negotiations with all the concerned nuclear weapons powers, both politically and technically, to move forward towards non-discriminatory nuclear non-proliferation and that, in the process, India's nuclear options for security purposes should not be eroded, till a time-bound non-discriminatory disarmament programme came into being. We had indicated that we would be willing to participate in negotiating for a comprehensive test ban treaty and a fissile material cut-off treaty on the basis of the aforementioned terms of reference. We had also indicated that our policy orientation on this subject would be non-confrontationist and, at the same time, aimed at avoiding isolation from the international community on these issues. We had adopted this approach consciously despite anticipating that the nuclear non-proliferation treaty was likely to be extended; a treaty we had no intention to be a part of. But some time between March and May 1994 India did a complete volte face and went back to the chanting of mantras on disarmament with a confrontationist attitude which characterised our policies till the mid-1980s. Even the nuances of Rajiv Gandhi's disarmament policies and the disarmament plan which he presented to the UN General Assembly in 1988 were ignored. The result was that we got isolated on nuclear non-proliferation issues which remain a dilemma of Indian foreign policy even today.

We had taken the right initiatives to establish diplomatic and economic relations with the Central Asian Republics soon after the break-up of the Soviet Union. We had established diplomatic missions in all the five Central Asian Republics between January 1992 and

the middle of 1993. We also sent a number of high-level delegations to these countries to work out specific projects and programmes relating to economic and technological cooperation with them. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao himself visited Uzbekistan, Kazhakistan, Khyrgystan and Turkmenistan in May 1993. But from 1993 onwards, there was an inexplicable downward curve in our attention to the Central Asian Republics. Domestic concerns, incidents like the Babri mosque destruction (6 December 1992) and the communal riots following it were only a partial causation of this neglect. We somehow seemed to have lost our economic and strategic focus on this vital region. The result has been that relations between India and the Central Asian Republics have gone adrift since the end of 1993. Given the markets of these countries, the prospect of Indian joint ventures in them and the fact that these countries are a source of minerals and possess vast energy resources, their importance cannot be overemphasised. It is time to take remedial action.

India's foreign policy went through a period of zealous and misplaced positivism and petulant assertiveness between 1996 and the beginning of 1998 during the prime ministerships of Deve Gowda and I.K. Gujral. It has to be emphasised that unlike during the previous 49 years from 1947 to 1996, the years 1996 to 1998 witnessed Gujral being a dominant influence on India's foreign policy first as Foreign Minister and then as Prime Minister. The overarching role in orienting the foreign policy, which all the previous Indian Prime Ministers played, changed during the period that Gujral was Foreign Minister in his second spell in that capacity. The zealous positivism which I mentioned was manifested in what was described as the "Gujral doctrine". The essence of the doctrine as articulated by Gujral was that keeping in mind India's large size, resources and strengths, India would follow a determined policy of showing unilateral goodwill towards its neighbours without demanding any reciprocity. Transmuting this doctrine to policy decisions Gujral resumed the interrupted dialogue with Pakistan unconditionally, he signed a 30-year agreement on sharing the waters of the Ganga below the Farakka Barrage with Bangladesh, ratified the agreement on the Mahakali project with Nepal, liberalised the visa regime for

travel between Pakistan and India, offered transit facilities to Bangladesh for trading purposes with Nepal and Bhutan and removed tariff and non-tariff barriers on the exports of India's neighbouring countries. There is no doubt that these gestures generated an atmosphere of normalcy in the South Asian region and reduced tensions. The point to be discerned is that *none of these initiatives were new*. They had already been on the anvil since Rajiv Gandhi's time and consequent decisions were being implemented in a more measured and realistic manner by Narasimha Rao, with the Government of India monitoring the details and nuances of the responses of India's neighbours while commencing these policy initiatives. Gujral undoubtedly speeded up the process, and received approval and admiration.

Some relevant questions in this context, however, need to be answered. First, has there been even a marginal positive response to these initiatives of Gujral from India's neighbours? That Gujral made these gestures without demanding any reciprocity is not the point. The point is that this unilateralism had as its objective the growth of cooperativeness and trust from India's neighbours. This has not happened.

Pakistan, while agreeing to resume the dialogue, repeatedly stressed (and continues to do so) that a compromise on Kashmir according to its wishes would be a precondition to the dialogue covering other subjects and resulting in general bilateral cooperation.

Bangladesh remains reticent and distant about expanding economic, technological and political cooperation with India. Bangladesh has not been willing even to extradite the separatist terrorists from Assam who have established bases in that country. Giving a commitment to share waters of the Ganga basin for an extended period of 30 years without requesting Bangladesh to examine the feasibility of augmenting the water flows in the deltaic regions located in that country from other riparian sources did not (and does not) seem to be either practical or wise. Both from the demographic and agricultural viewpoints, India and Bangladesh require an imaginative and long-term plan for augmenting downstream flows from the Ganga and Brahmaputra basins. Our

extending concessions in a 30-year agreement should have evoked from Bangladesh at least a general and technical commitment to jointly examine with us measures for augmenting the water flows. Gujral, instead, had not only given a unilateral concession but also a compartmentalised one generating demands on the waters of the Ganga and its tributaries which are so important for the agriculture and ecology requirements of practically all the states of North and Central India.

There has been no reaction of goodwill and trust from Nepal either, despite the friendly gestures by Gujral. The agreement on the Mahakali project has again been questioned by the Nepalese political parties since the end of 1997. Also, Nepal wants the 1950 Treaty to be revised. While we should agree to the revision of this treaty, we must remain forewarned that Nepal is reclaiming not only the Kalapani area but also theoretically reasserting its claim on Darjeeling and adjacent areas.

The Government of India had not been able to meet the concerns of the Government of Bhutan about infiltration by ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam) extremists into Bhutan. While Sri Lanka was happy and reassured about India's commitment not to interfere in its affairs, the continuing ethnic crisis there inevitably has the potentiality of enmeshing India as well. While non-interference and detachment was the right policy, an unwillingness to exert India's influence to help the Sri Lankan Government resolve the ethnic terrorism was not a valid approach.

To sum up, the Gujral doctrine's maximum impact has been in terms of cosmetics. It did not make any qualitative impact on improving regional relations since 1996.

The Deve Gowda and Gujral Governments made declarations about keeping India's attention focussed and operational to expand relations with ASEAN and Central Asia and to make progress in relations with China. In reality, India's foreign policy did not move beyond these declarations. There has been a decline in the content and range of relations with ASEAN and Central Asian Republics only partially due to the recent economic crisis in these regions. The decline occurred mainly because of uncertainties and political

indecisiveness on a number of projects and proposals of economic cooperation with ASEAN on the part of India. As regards China, the Government of India failed to utilise the opportunity of President Jiang Zemin's visit to Delhi in November 1996 to move forward on the very useful work done by the China-India Joint Working Group to resolve the boundary dispute. Relations with China, which are important in political and strategic terms, have been in a drift since 1996. The momentum generated by the contacts between the Indian and Chinese leaders between 1988 and 1993 has been stalled.

Relations with the Russian Federation during the Deva Gowda-Gujral period have shown some expansion in the field of defence and nuclear cooperation. India has, however, been subjected to the criticism that it has not fully safeguarded its economic and technological interests in the defence projects and nuclear cooperation projects which it has agreed upon with Russia. These projects primarily serve the Russian Federation's export interests and foreign exchange requirements, according to these critics. To be specific in illustrating this criticism, there was the view that the Sukhoi multirole aircraft, which India had bought from the Russian Federation, had been inducted without these aircraft being fully developed and without their operational efficiency being proved. Similarly, the two 1000-megawatt nuclear power reactors which India had contracted for, with the Russian Federation, had been criticised as an expensive deal. The critics hold that the resources allocated for the purchase of these reactors could have been utilised more effectively to maintain and upgrade the existing nuclear power reactors within India. There is, of course, the general criticism that overdependence on the Russian Federation inhibited India's ability to diversify its sources for obtaining technological inputs for its economy and defence supplies.

The point regarding petulant assertiveness in the latest phase in the evolution of our foreign policy particularly applied to India's relations with the United States. It is my assessment that we became excessively confrontationist with the US on nuclear disarmament issues, particularly CTBT. We also exhibited such a petulance and ineffective assertiveness in the run-up to the meeting between Prime

Minister I.K. Gujral and President Bill Clinton, in New York in September 1997, as well as in the run-up to the scheduled discussions between the Indian Defence Secretary and officials of the US Defence Department in 1997 which were cancelled because we felt that the US was not giving due acknowledgement to the status and seniority of the personnel of our delegation. These involutions in India's foreign policy in relation to the US could have been avoided if we had fashioned our policy stances and pronouncements with greater deliberation and a sense of balance about where our interests lay and about the extent of the leverages that we had. One can safely conclude that our responses were emotional and lacking in realism.

Another glaring example of this critical evaluation, which resulted in a faux pas, was Gujral's statement in Calcutta on 31 January 1998 that the Government of India will not "tolerate" any military action against Iraq and that India had cautioned the US by means of a letter to President Clinton. Gujral stressed that India's concern was that such an attack would result in regional tension and create danger for the 250,000 Indians living in the Gulf region. The first point to be noted is that the tone of the Indian message as indicated in this reported public declaration was quixotic. It is obvious that the US would not take any warning or an assertively cautionary note from India seriously because the latter has neither the power nor the influence to take any effective action against the US after issuing such a warning. Issuing such a futile warning to a superpower only reduced India's credibility in the international community. Secondly, the Government of India should have taken note of the fact that none of the Islamic or Arab countries expressed any strong opposition to the US initiative or through the United Nations in this respect. True, some reluctance and reservations were conveyed to the USA. We should have consulted important Arab countries as well as other Islamic countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia before issuing warnings and cautionary declarations to the US. Thirdly, while India has an abiding interest in having good cooperative relations with the people of Iraq, it should keep in mind the fact that Saddam Hussain, within a short period of a decade and a half, had

unilaterally launched attacks on sister Muslim and Non-aligned countries and was the originator of these tensions. There was no need for India to identify itself with Saddam Hussain, given his authoritarian, oppressive and violent persona. Fourthly, this declaration by Gujral could only revive resentments in the Gulf countries against India, in the context of the track record of of Gujral taking a conciliatory stance *vis-à-vis* Saddam Hussain during the Gulf War. Instead of issuing warnings and declarations of not tolerating actions of one kind or the other by the US, it would have been sufficient if the Government of India had urged resolution of the latest crisis with Iraq through political negotiations. The declaration could have pointed out India's legitimate concern about safety of Indian residents in the region, including an assurance to them (the Indians) that in case a conflict, India would take appropriate measures to ensure their safety by arranging for their repatriation to India.

The fact that Iraq could possess chemical and biological weapons and the possibility of Saddam Hussain using them in case of a conflict should also have influenced our policy statement. This did not happen. One gets the disturbing feeling that India's foreign policy was lacking in thoughtful calculation and assessment of the country's interests and in the realisation of Arab equations with important centres of power in the international community. The BJP Government, which came to power after the 1998 general elections, would have to bear the heavy responsibility of redressing these imbalances and bringing India's foreign policy back on track.

This completes in a manner the analysis of predicaments and politico-historic trends which affected our foreign policy over the last 50 years.

The crucial question, however, remains: What were the aberrations and inadequacies in India's sense of collective self and its internal orientations? These aspects have been touched upon in previous chapters. The aim here is to sum up lack of realism in our sense of self and their impact on India's foreign policy.

The first characteristic of our collective sense of self has been about India being predestined to play a role of leadership and

prominent influence in world affairs because of our civilisational virtues, territorial and demographic size, and our self-declared adherence to high moral principles. Also, that we do not seek influence or power through economic and technological capacities or military power sounds idealistic. But to expect the world around us to accord India a leadership role purely on civilisational factors and professed morality is both unrealistic and undesirable.

Secondly, the above sense of self has resulted in an inclination on our part to get enmeshed and involved in controversies and situations which had no direct relevance to our interests. Being invited to play a role in such situations because of our international credibility is a different matter. But such recognition of India came to an end with Nehru passing from the scene. Nehru's successors, without adjusting to the realities of international relations, not only presumed that India would retain its influence and leadership role but also wrongly felt that India deserved such a role regardless of its own economic and military power and political capacities. This state of affairs resulted in India always wanting to be represented on the various organs of multilateral fora, India desiring a large share in the secretariat of such organisations and India making pronouncements on international disputes and controversies regardless of the relevance of these disputes and controversies to India's interests. Add to these factors the contradiction between our desire to be acknowledged as a "world power" on the one hand and the eagerness to be considered good and moral on the other.

The third aberration has been in the form of an ideological rigidity which afflicts our foreign policy, though not at the highest level. Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Chandra Shekhar and Narasimha Rao did not wear an ideological straitjacket when dealing with foreign policy issues. But Members of Parliament and the foreign policy establishment of India suffered from this rigidity, which inhibited abilities regarding clinical exercise of options, particularly by Rajiv Gandhi and Narasimha Rao and, to a lesser extent, by Mrs. Gandhi. India's policy stances on the intricacies of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, on East-West relations during the Cold

War, on the relevance and utility of the Non-aligned Movement and on foreign economic policy and economic reforms suffered from this ideological handicap. Such stances contradicted the basic philosophy of freedom of options and the capacity for flexible adjustment which underpinned Nehru's approach to India's foreign policy. It must be mentioned in parantheses that India's unrealistic anxiety to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, while being outside the mainstream of international thinking on global issues due to the compulsions of our national interests, is a manifestation of India's exaggerated sense of self. No segment of the international community denies India's size, its demography, its importance as a democracy but to be given a leadership role, India has to become politically stable, economically, technologically and militarily strong. Moreover, India must have a structure of equations with the important powers of the world, which would endorse India's role and the influence of its leadership. Leadership cannot be achieved by going around begging for it or indulging in self-proclamations about it. A point of self-criticism which I would indulge in as a former member of the Foreign Service is the general tendency in our establishment to conform to perceived foreign policy orientations of the political leadership at given points of time, even before specific policies on specific situations or issues are decided upon. The inclination to give clinical and objective assessments and to have the courage of conviction to dissent at the advisory stage of policy making have diminished in the Indian Foreign Service with the passage of years. There have been exceptions, but, generally, there is an unwillingness to give unpleasant and unpalatable advice or assessments. This happened during the Hungarian and Suez crisis, just before the Sino-Indian conflict, on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, during the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, during the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka, as well as during the latest phase of the application of the Gujral doctrine.

Another unfortunate aspect is the absence of institutional arrangements for an integrated foreign policy mechanism in the Government of India which has been a handicap in foreign policy formulations. I have touched upon this point earlier. There are

no institutional arrangements for coordination among the Defence Ministry, the Ministry of External Affairs, the Home Ministry and the intelligence agencies of the Government of India. Attempts to remedy this shortcoming have floundered on the rocks of political indecisiveness and bureaucratic competition for turf.

The contradiction between our moral professions and political necessities has been a continuous aberration in our foreign policy. We have not been able to strike the necessary balance to meet the endemic "amorality" characterising international relations. Our moral professions and our civilisational claims result in our assuming a hectoring, pontificating and sometimes insensitive stance in negotiations and exchanges of views, which offends our foreign interlocutors. It is obvious that if we tell our neighbours in the ASEAN that their culture and their language and their history are all the exclusive result of Indian civilisational forces, they would resent this superciliousness. They have their own sense of identity and their national pride. Similarly, passing moral judgements on the US or Russia and lecturing them on what to do and what not to do, while being dependent on them for various kinds of assistance, affects India's ability as well as its image.

The overall conclusion which one cannot escape is that we have to realistically assess our strengths and limitations and define our position with respect to regional as well as global equations. Such an assessment is essential if our foreign policy has to be imbued with practicality and purposiveness, and has to be responsive to our genuine interests.

We also have to take note of the perception about India and its attitudes on foreign policy on the part of the international community. While India's prominent position among the newly independent developing nations, as a democracy and as a potential economic power, is acknowledged, important powers of the world consider India politically unstable, with a somewhat uncertain political future. There is also the perception that India is a soft state lacking in decisiveness, collective discipline and coherence and continuity in its domestic and foreign policies.

Be that as it may, there is also the perception that India has certain strategic objectives: consolidating its position as a regional power in South Asia, grounded in military superiority over Pakistan and lesser regional entities; achieving military paramountcy throughout the Indian Ocean region; acquiring sufficient economic and military power to achieve a pre-eminent position in the international community through the instrumentality of multilateral fora. In the evolving post-Cold War situation this general perception about India has resulted in the superpowers wishing to situate it in a controllable secondary position in international equations. Interestingly, there is an unarticulated consensus on this approach amongst all the nuclear weapons powers, which also happen to be the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. India's immediate neighbours remain apprehensive of its intentions and regional potentialities. Their endeavour would be to generate positive impulses and create such equations with other regional and global centres of powers so as to neutralise their apprehensions about India. The only way to overcome this situation is for India itself to structure equations with the major centres of powers on the basis of intermeshed and interdependent interests and, within India, to cross the threshold of economic and military strengths which would persuade neighbours as well as the international community that adjusting to India rather than controlling its potentialities would be a more realistic option.

I have dwelt at some length on the inadequacies and aberrations in our foreign policy. What then can be considered the successes of India's foreign policy? Whatever India's limitations and shortcomings have been, its achievements in some important respects cannot be denied. Here are a few examples:

(1) Despite enormous diversities and centrifugal forces affecting us, we have remained a united country.
(2) We have safeguarded our territorial integrity against external threats and pressures which we have faced in the form of subversion, military threats and internal and external political and military challenges.

(3) Though subject to negative perceptions by our neighbours (however unjustifed they may be), we have maintained a working relationship with all our neighbours in overall terms, whatever the interim ups and downs might have been.

(4) It is also to be noted that there has not been a single instance where we have shown tendencies of territorial aggrandisement or political hegemony with regard to our neighbours despite there being fundamental disputes affecting our relations with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and China.

(5) We have retained our foreign policy and our nuclear, space and technological options, successfully resisting continuous negative pressures on us to fall in line with discriminatory arrangements and regimes which would have been detrimental to our national interests.

(6) We have managed to structure a working relationship with all the major powers of the world on a continuous basis over the last 50 years, whether it was during the Cold War period, or during the profound transitions witnessed by the world after the end of the Cold War.

(7) We are an active member of most multilateral fora dealing with global issues, even if we are not given the role and position due to us because of global power equations.

(8) We have managed our defence and foreign economic relations with sufficient flexibility to meet basic interests to ensure the security and well-being of our people in a complex world in constant ferment and change.

That we have achieved all this as a democracy, which is subject to contradictory pulls and pressures of a plural society characterised by enormous diversities, is a remarkable achievement. If one were to indulge in a comparative evaluation with the track record of other developing countries, what India has achieved in foreign policy terms, in some respects, is something which the countries of Europe are still in the process of achieving after nearly 300 years of experience as nation-states with lesser populations and endowed with much greater resources. At this

juncture of our passage past the half-century milestone of existence as a Republic, we have to draw satisfication in our achievements while critically evaluating the pros and cons of our experiences in international relations.

One last point: there will reason for us to be imbued with hope only if we remain united as a country and do not succumb to the forces of fragmentation and divisiveness.

15

Tasks Ahead: Challenges for India's Foreign Policy

International relations, like general processes of history, defy attempts to force their flow into predetermined theoretical patterns or preconceived logical grooves. Prognoses in foreign policy cannot be straitjacketed in *a priori* generalisations. When discussing the future of international relations or challenges to our foreign policy, we are dealing with the complexity of human emotions, the involutions of human motivations and the ambiguities and uncertainties of the political and socio-economic impulses which underpin them. Foreign policy's eternal challenge is to deal with the unpredictability of interstate and intersocietal relations. International relations will remain involuted, subject to wayward human behaviour. They are baroque, in a manner of speaking.

It is with a profound awareness of this limitation that I undertake the speculative exercise about the tasks facing India's foreign policy in the twenty-first century and the challenges that we would face.

At the most fundamental level, the challenge that India as well as other members of the international community face is to resolve a basic contradiction affecting prospects of human survival. This

contradiction is best expressed in the debate between philosophers and socio-economic theoreticians about the perfectibility of human beings. Such a debate and its repercussions marked the end of the eighteenth century. On the one had was Thomas Robert Malthus, who posited that power of populations is indefinitely greater than the capacity of the earth to produce sufficient subsistence for human beings. According to Malthus, while population increases by geometrical progression, productive capacities increase only in arithmetical progression. Social upheaval and instability, therefore, are the predetermined future predicament of mankind. As opposed to this theory, scholars such as Antoine Condorcet and William Godwin argued that the growth of human understanding, the increase in the capacity for self-improvement and the breakthroughs in technologies and knowledge would one day lead to a more equitable world where people would live free from crime, disease, war and want. Developments over the last 200 years have proved Malthus's analysis of the population to productivity ratio right but his dire prophecies to be wrong. At the same time, the prognosis of Godwin and Condorcet have proved to be right, while their questioning of Malthus's theory about imbalances between population growth and productivity have proved to be wrong. Populations have increased in a geometrical progression, while productivity has been increasing at lower rates but there has been an increase in the human capacity for self-improvement; unexpected breakthroughs in knowledge and technology have made the world progressively a more equitable and comfortable place to live in.

As the future inevitably originates in the impulses of the past, it would be pertinent to confirm the preceding positive assessment through some specifics. Trends since the middle of the nineteenth century till now, when we are on the threshold of the twenty-first century, clearly indicate that the world is more egalitarian. The information technology revolution and the consequent increasingly expeditious access to information, combined with the emergence of user-friendly technologies, have resulted in the increasing empowerment of individuals. The levers of power are increasingly in the hands of average human beings all over the world, compared

to their being a monopoly of oligarchic or plutocratic elites in different societies and states. Political colonialism has disappeared; so has slavery. There is a universally greater shared concern about human rights. There is also an increasing awareness that the natural resources of the world should be exploited and utilised in a more equitable manner while, at the same time, being subject to the imperatives of ecological balance and environmental protection. Discrimination based on ethnicity, language and race, which characterised the attitudes and policies of different states and societies, depending on their military and technological strengths, are now subject to the moral pressure of international public opinion and the political and legal pressures of the norms of international law. The power structure of nation-states is going through a metamorphosis. Nation-states as they evolved since the Treaties of Westphelia, signed in 1648, are now subject to the pressures generated by the economic and technological globalisation of the world. Their relevance in the conventional sense of the term (nation-state) and their claim to unqualified sovereignty are now in question. Socio-economic interdependence between different countries, the democratisation of international politics, the disappearance of the Cold War antagonism and the incapacity of national boundaries to compartmentalise the flow of ideas and information have resulted in the requirement of nation-states redefining their respective identities.

There are also certain strands of emerging conventional wisdom in international politics, the logic and validity of which must be examined when determining the problems and challenges that India would face in fashioning its foreign policy and structuring its external relations. The first of such strands is the theory that the world has become unipolar and that there is going to be "*Pax Americana*" for the next hundred years or so. One does not question the fact that the United States will be the most dominant factor in world politics for quite some time to come, but in terms of technological capacities, access and control of natural resources, population strengths and economic determinants of investment opportunities and markets, the world is bound to be multipolar with other power centres being

Western Europe, the Russian Federation, China, Japan, India and some strong regional arrangements if they were to emerge in South America and Africa. A major task for India would be to nurture its economic and technological capacities and to increase its political stability and military strength to levels where it can elevate itself to a position of strength to network an equilibrium with the new power centres of the emerging multipolar world. Indications are there that an atmosphere and an opportunity for such networking now exist.

Then there is the theory about the world facing confrontation based on religious and civilisational identities of different societies. I am referring to the Samuel Huntington thesis about the clash of civilisations which has become a fashionable reference point to speculate on the future of interstate relations. This theory is of particular relevance to India because Huntington visualises our country being in a state of isolation because it is neither Islamic nor Christian. He visualises an India without allies or natural external political support systems. His theory is of intriguing interest because while he talks about India's potential isolation, he prognosticates that there would be a collusion between Confucian and Islamic civilisations, against the Western, Christian and Judaic civilisations. Huntington's thesis merits a detailed critical evaluation before one proceeds to discuss the foreign policy challenges that India may face in specific terms.

Despite the accolades bestowed upon Huntington as the West's most eminent contemporary political scientist and an intellectual responsible for a seminal work (see remarks attributed to Henry A. Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski on the back flap of his book *The Clash of Civilisations and Remaking of the World Order*), anybody with a sense of history and sensitivities about the fundamentals of human conditions only has a sense of *déja vu* on studying his thesis. His central thesis is that the forces of modernisation in the economic and technological sense and the resulting trends in global politics are leading to a reconfiguration of peoples and countries as collective entities; peoples and countries with similar religions and cultures are coming together. Peoples and countries with different cultures are going apart. Alignments based

on ideology and superpower relations are being replaced by those based on culture and civilisation. Political boundaries are being redrawn to conform to the cultural, ethnic, religious and civilisational identities. The fault lines between civilisations are becoming the central lines of conflict in global politics.

Huntingon proceeds from this general proposition to argue that there will be a conflict between Islamic and Christian civilisations. He talks about the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc from the Bulge of Africa to Central Asia. As already mentioned, he speculates that there would be a collusion between Confucian and Islamic civilisational entities on the one hand and the Judaic and Christian civilisational entities on the other. The competition between these two systems, groupings or alliances would be for wealth, for technology and for control over natural resources, and if the non-Western "Sinic" and "Islamic" entities become modern without becoming Western and acquire matching technology and economic capacities, it would be detrimental to the interests of the Western Christian civilisation. So the West will have to adjust to non-Western modern civilisational entities whose values and interests are bound to be significantly different from those of the West. And therefore the West will have to maintain its economic and military superiority in comparison to the non-Western civilisations to protect its interests. This is the gist of the prognosis which Huntington wants to convey to the world. Oswald Spengler predicted the decline of the Western Christian civilisation because of lack of discipline and coherence in late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Huntington shares with him a worldview which is essentially confrontationist and negatively deterministic.

The first criticism of Huntington's work is that its claim to originality is at best tenuous. He also has dealt with life cycles of societies and states through the civilisational prism and has tried to compartmentalise and generalise historical processes and intersocietal relations on the basis of spiritual content, chronological duration, the rhythm and technological characteristics of the economic processes, exactly as historians G. Vico and Professor Arnold Toynbee had done earlier. Like them Huntingon shows occasional acute historical insight but unlike them he fails to

comprehend the will to survive that characterises human societies, transcending national identities or religious or cultural affiliations. One is tempted to enquire how Huntington would define and characterise the 13-odd Crusades which lasted from A.D. 1095 to 1444. Were those just a conflict between states and feudal principalities of Europe and the Sultanates of the Middle East and the Near East or were they also a clash of civilisations? So what is new in Huntington's thesis?

The second criticism of Huntington's theory on the clash of civilisations is definitional. The proposition or predication by which he defines a civilisation is religion. The logical question arises: Can the phenomenon of civilisation be miniaturised by considering civilisation as coterminus with religious affiliations of peoples, societies or states? Civilisations cannot be straitjacketed into singular religious identities. Civilisation is a dialectical phenomenon manifesting a highly developed state or society backed by social mores and traditions, technological, economic, cultural, aesthetic and creative capacities. These elements and these characteristics of a civilisation transcend religious affiliations and theocratic identities. All the major religions of the world do not in themselves encompass the entire civilisational entity of peoples, who claim affiliation to one religion or the other. Huntington is therefore wrong *ab initio* in prognosticating conflicts on the basis of the narrower and inaccurate perception of what constitutes a civilisation.

The third criticism of Huntington's thesis is the invalidity of his argument that the fault lines between civilisations are becoming the central lines of conflicts in global politics and that ideology and power equations are no longer relevant. This is an intellectual misrepresentation and a factually wrong perception. International politics, as the events since the end of the Cold War have proved repeatedly, is still governed by motivations of geostrategic dominance, the desire to have access to, and control of, natural resources, to possess or develop exclusive capacities for advanced technologies and to prevent conflict situations which do not serve the specific interests of the more powerful countries.

The effectiveness with which the preceding objectives can be met still depends on political stability, economic strength and technological capacities. Alliances and equations aimed at fulfilling the aforementioned motivations continue to be made, transcending religious and civilisational identities of states and societies. There is no other way in which we can understand and explain the equations between the US and the Western democracies on the one hand and the large number of African, West Asian and South-East Asian countries with differing religious affiliations on the other.

The fourth objection to Huntington's thesis pertains to his perception of major religions of the world as monolithic phenomena when it comes to political and economic manifestations and activities of societies and states. His thesis ignores realities that stare all of us in the face about internal divisions and differences affecting each of the major religions of the world, not only at the political and economic levels, but also at the spiritual and theological levels. To imagine that large numbers of people would transcend emotional, psychological and intellectual differences from which they suffer in terms of their religious identity to come together to participate in a clash of civilisations is a wishful hypothesis rather than a thesis based on deductive reasoning.

The fifth point of criticism refers to Huntington's forecasting a complete elimination of all plural societies and states in the world which have been characterised by long-standing diversities. In that case would not the clash of civilisations destroy the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation and, of course, India? One feels that Huntington should have tempered his views with some existentialist political realism.

Huntington's view that there would be evolving collusion between the Chinese and Islamic civilisations cannot stand the test of the ground realities. The Chinese attitude towards its own Muslim minority is marked by suspicion and apprehensions about religious extremism. Huntington is only partially correct when he claims that in the context of the criteria of civilisational identities which he has propounded, India is likely to be an isolated entity and that it will have to make deliberate choices about siding with one civilisation

or the other in terms of the compartmentalisation which he has indulged in. Given India's plural society and the Islamic demographic ingredients of the composite identity of the Indian Republic, one may well ask: is the type of choice which Huntington delineates realistic or viable?

One has to deeply ruminate on the predicaments envisaged by Huntington. Though one disagrees both in fundamentals and in detail with Huntington's theory about the clash of civilisations, one would agree that he has contrived and presented a challenging framework to evaluate some of the emerging realities of global politics into the twenty-first century. He has certainly succeeded in being provocative and, to that extent, his book has some relevance. Looking at the statistical tables and the political interpretations of Huntington's thesis, one gets the impression that the provocation for this work perhaps originated during or immediately after the 1991 Gulf War in which the United States' military assertiveness against Iraq was perceived as a religious confrontation by segments of US academia.

The reason for my lengthy critical evaluation of the Huntington thesis is that inherent in this thesis is one of the overarching and fundamental challenges that India's foreign policy will face in the coming century. While the Huntington thesis is definitionally flawed and based on *a priori* confrontationist motivations, it brings out in relief the fact that India, the South-East Asian countries (such as Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia), China and Japan are not part of the broad religio-cultural categories which may dominate the power equations. India particularly, because of its plurality and its being a composite of practically all the major religions, and cultural groups of the world, does not easily fit into the Christian-Judaic camp or the Islamic camp. Indian foreign policy, therefore, would have to facilitate our country's integration with one of the camps visualised by Huntington, if his thesis is correct. This is not going to be easy because the Hindu majority in India is a very India-specific phenomenon. The 120 million Muslims in India, whose numbers may increase to 250 or 300 million, in the next century would generate pressures for developing equations with the Islamic world. The other religio-ethnic identities of India may generate

contradictory pressures towards the other camp. The prospect to be alert about, and to be consistently monitored, is that such pressures are not generated. The concretisation of this prospect occurred in the break-up of Yugoslavia on ethnic and religious lines. The break-up of the Soviet Union was the result of other impulses but the phenomenon of ethno-religious separatism afflicting the Russian Federation and Georgia provide warning signs to be taken note of by India.

Another dimension to this challenge is that the sanctity of maintaining state structures of plural societies, characterised by diversity, stands eroded, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. If such societies do not have the inner discipline, the required levels of economic and technological development endowed with social justice, and if they do not have the defence capacities to sustain themselves, the other power centres of the world would not be supportive of their unity and integrity. In fact, a disintegration of such state structures could be perceived as making the world a more manageable place by the more powerful, more cohesive and economically advanced countries in the international community. India's foreign, political, economic and national security policies should be pre-emptively responsive to this challenge.

Before turning to the specific tasks on which Indian foreign policy should focus, it would be pertinent to analyse broad trends which would characterise international relations in the coming decades and the motivations of the important powers of the world which would underpin them.

Emerging trends make it obvious that international relations would be dominated by the industrially and technologically advanced countries led by the United States well into the twenty-first century. The first objective of these countries would be to create an international political system in which states and civil societies would be structured on the basis of political and economic terms of reference acceptable to the US and those world powers which would be responsive to their interests. State systems governed by democratic trans-Atlantic terms of reference would be sought to be established. The individual social requirements, traditions and

cultures of the countries of Africa and Asia will be questioned and they are likely to be diminished. Political and economic pressures, even coercive pressures, may be generated for this purpose. Secondly, regardless of the claims regarding an emerging equitable and fair economic order, the orientations would be to create a globalised free market economy in a manner in which the advanced industrial countries would remain dominant and influential. Controversies which have arisen after the signing of the Marakash Agreements in March 1995 and the additionalities regarding social clauses, intellectual property rights and the time frame for speeding up the implementation of the WTO's export and import regimes confirm this prospect. The third phenomenon characterising world politics would be the orientation of the foreign policies of the important powers to maintain and to acquire access and control over the raw material and the natural resources of the world, especially of infrastructural, economic and strategic importance such as oil, natural gas and minerals. The alertness and the speed with which this objective is attended to was first indicated in the promptitude with which the former US Secretary of State James Baker visited Kazakhistan to negotiate his country's entry into the Kazak economy, even before the revised arrangements of relations between the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and the Russian Federation were finalised in the aftermath of the break-up of the Soviet Union (in 1991-92). Another example was the alacrity with which a consortium of businessmen from the USA visited Congo in the summer of 1997 when Mobutu was about to be ousted from the presidentship by a military coup. These businessmen entered into negotiations with leaders of the anti-Mobutu forces and paid an advance of 3 billion dollars to them for long-term access to the natural resources of Congo. The basic aim was clear: that advanced countries should not fall short of essential raw materials nor should their pre-eminent economic position be eroded.

The fourth characteristic of international relations which India would have to cope with is the objective of the Western industrially advanced countries to maintain long-term exclusive control over sophisticated technologies. Regimes governing the transfer of higher

technologies being put in place since the beginning of the 1980s have sent out a clear signal that the industrialised advanced economies consider unrestricted transfer of technologies to the developing countries a threat to their capacity (i.e., of the industrially advanced countries) to maintain the competitive edge over the majority of countries of the world. The emphasis on the concept of "dual use technologies" and the anxieties that such technologies should be made available to the developing countries under restrictive and discriminatory disciplines and subject to strict safeguards establish the validity of the assessment regarding the acquisitive motivations of the more important powers which I have mentioned earlier. This restrictive approach has manifested itself in the export policies of the advanced countries regarding supercomputers, computer hardware, higher electronics, lasers, robotics, genetic engineering and technologies related to the management and utilisation of biodiversities. This acquisitively competitive approach goes beyond the transfer of technologies originating in these countries. The manner in which certain aspects of intellectual property rights and international standards for the patents clause are sought to be structured militates against the traditional capacity as well as the self-reliance of developing countries. The struggle which India has to engage itself in preventing Western entrepreneurs from patenting the use of *neem* and turmeric for medical and health purposes is a case in point. These items have been used as ingredients of traditional medicines and health care in India for hundreds of years. The move to claim royalty rights and economic returns on the use of these items under new names and new packaging patented in the West was a blatant attempt at intrusive exploitation. This phenomenon is not going to abate. The processes of globalisation will be used as an excuse for such purposes. The discriminatory and restrictive approach regarding the transfer of technologies will fundamentally affect the capacity for self-reliance, productivity and the ability to produce quality goods of the developing countries. The competition generated by free market economy can be useful and relevant only if it ensures fair play, equity and justice in international economic transactions. Though this is the declared rationale for adhering to the mainstream of

international economic trends, in certain dimensions, the actual developments indicate intentions to the contrary.

That meeting the aforementioned macro-level, political, economic and technological objectives necessitates the US and other important powers of the world to maintain their military and technological superiority over the majority of the countries of the world is not just an undeclared objective; it has been articulated. Statements made by President George Bush and President Bill Clinton and by leaders of the European Union, and to some extent, even of the Russian Federation since the end of 1991 and beginning of 1992, have expressed the following views:

The new world order should aim at preventing the emergence of militarily powerful countries (except those which are already militarily powerful and nuclearly weaponised) as regional or subregional hegemonies.

(A corollary of the preceding view is the insistence on discriminatory non-proliferation of various kinds of weapons of mass destruction and insistence on reduction of conventional forces and conventional armaments.)

The national and regional export control policies of the advanced countries back up this objective of multifaceted restrictive regimes controlling the transfer of technologies.

The introduction of the concepts of "irresponsible" states and "rogue" states into the lexicon of international law and foreign policy is part of this exercise. To be candid, except the United States and Iraq, no other country has used weapons of mass destruction without provocation on civilian populations. The inclination to apply this label to other countries on the basis of political motivations other than the objective criteria developed by the UN should be noted.

The policy of restricting the military and technological capacities of countries which do not fully conform to the stipulations of the great powers is not just a political stance. This stance has found operational expression in the last three decades of the twentieth century. The attack on the Ossirak nuclear facilities in Iraq by Israel, the fulfilment of Henry Kissinger's warning to Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto that his nuclear weaponisation policies would lead to disastrous consequences for

him (for Bhutto), the US's coercive stance on Iraq in 1990 and 1998 and the air strikes on Libya in the 1980s prove this point.

It is also significant that US officials, while mounting military pressure on Iraq in January/February 1998, articulated the view that the policies towards that country were not just aimed at Baghdad but they were also a signal to other countries which may have inclinations to acquire weapons of mass destruction, whatever their security concerns or justifications may be.

These US officials further expressed the view that those countries which do not abide by stipulated international disciplines on non-proliferation matters should be ready to forefeit their sovereignty, if necessary under pressure of superior military force.

The expectation that, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the UN would become stronger, would become more democratised and would play a more effectively impartial role in ensuring world peace and stability, has not been fulfilled. The UN, at least during the 1990s, has become more of an instrumentality of foreign policy objectives of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and particularly that of the United States. The UN has been used either as a cosmetic umbrella, or a fig leaf, for the USA's political and military moves in reordering the world with the support of the other important powers. The manner in which the crises in Yugoslavia, Somalia and Iraq were handled leads one to this conclusion. If we add to this list the powerful multilateral financial institutions operating on the policy orientations of Western advanced countries, it becomes obvious that the emerging world order would remain subject to the overarching influence of the United States and that it will remain unfairly competitive and acquisitive.

While countries such as the Russian Federation, Japan, China and, to some extent, France and Germany may be able to counter the aforementioned trends, on specific issues related to their respective national interests, the rest of the world would have to succumb and adjust, unless new patterns of strategic understandings emerge and new power equations are established between some of these powerful countries and the more important developing countries such as India.

One must also mention, in parantheses, the likely framework of UN reforms. While the Security Council may be expanded with the addition of some more permanent members, it will be dominated by the European powers. The existing five members will retain their veto while the new permanent members are unlikely to be given this power. The advocacy for abolishing the veto will not get a positive response. The developmental and economic role of the UN will progressively shift away from it and will be concentrated in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank).

International commercial and technological arrangements will not only technically, but also politically, fall within the jurisdiction of the World Trade Organisation. A beneficial development in some respects, it could, however, be disadvantageous if the WTO were to toe an entirely Western line.

The increasing empowerment of peoples worldwide, generating democratic political impulses, combined with the speedy facility of obtaining almost unrestricted information, will generate significant centrifugal forces in those societies which cannot cope with the rising social and economic aspirations of their peoples. These centrifugal forces will find expression in ethno-religious or linguistic movements within state structures, threatening their very stability and unity. On the other hand, countries which are successful in economic management, and in creating a satisfactory quality of life, would become part of the centripetal arrangements of the type exemplified in the European Union and the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Association). I would have mentioned APEC (Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation) and ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) also, but given the economic upheavals that have affected ASEAN, since the middle of 1997, I exclude them from these centripetal orientations for the present.

These then are the broad trends in the international situation that India's foreign policy would have to deal with well into the twenty-first century. The capacity of our foreign policy to cope with the complexities which I have mentioned is inextricably linked with our current politico-economic and social predicament. The

positive ingredients of this predicament during the little more than 50 years of our existence as an independent country are that we remain committed to carrying on the processes of national consolidation and governance through democratic means. We have ensured food security for our unmanageably vast population. Despite our intensive diversities, we have managed, though just barely so, to maintain our political cohesion and unity. Barring the loss of territory at the end of 1962 Sino-Indian war, we have sustained our territorial unity and integrity. We are endowed with natural resources and technologically qualified manpower though the latter has not been developed to its full potentiality, nor has it been utilised as judiciously or as effectively as we could have. We have had a general consensus in regard to perception of our national interests and our foreign policy orientations. Despite the shortcomings in our foreign policy and critical perceptions about us in the countries of the region, and in the international community at different points of time, we have sustained a practical working relationship with most of our neighbours and with the majority of the countries of the world. Even where there are abiding adversarial relations with one or two of our neighbours, we have managed to prevent them from degenerating into military confrontation at least over the last two and a half decades of this century.

On the negative side, first of all, we have to acknowledge that the quality of politics in India has declined in many vital respects. Secondly, the efforts at national consolidation and reconstruction have made very slow progress. We have failed to achieve the minimum required standards in the fields of education, public health and infrastructural economic capacities. We rank rather low if we apply the international "quality of life" index to our society. We are subject to a rising curve of ethno-linguistic and religious fissiparous and secessionist tendencies. Despite being conscious of the imperative requirement of national security, our defence capacities remain inadequate. Over and above all, we have not been able to cope with the unmanageable increase in our population. The most optimistic estimate is that by the year 2050, India's population will stabilise at around 1.5 billion. If we add to this figure demographic pressures that

may be generated on us by a population of nearly 300 million in Bangladesh and between 270 and 320 million in Pakistan, at that point of time, the consequent political ramifications are daunting.

While we have managed to maintain a tenuous normalcy in our relations with most of our neighbours, they remain subject to undercurrents of tensions, related to specific issues or the perceptions about us in our neighbourhood regarding our hegemonic intentions. We are afflicted by a general ambience of indiscipline and lack of national purpose. We are generally considered a soft state with the additional problem of our exaggerated sense of self and our unrealistic desire to be acknowledged as a leading nation unrelated to the perceptions about our political stability, or the substance of our economic, technological and military power. This listing of inadequacies is necessary as they constitute a barrier of limitations on our capacity to structure a foreign policy capable of meeting the challenges ahead. What then are the tasks ahead? And what can we do to fulfil them?

First, the short- and medium-term objectives to be attended to. Ensuring the continuity, unity and territorial integrity of the Indian Republic is a matter of the highest priority in this respect. The certainties which animated our national struggle for freedom and the initial idealism about India's national unity stand eroded with the passage of time. Ethno-centric, linguistic and religious centrifugal tendencies have challenged the unity of India, be it in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab or the North-Eastern States. These tendencies, combined with territorial claims of neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and China, remain a threat to be coped with. Though we have generally preserved our territorial integrity and we are structuring equations with these two countries to prevent territorial alienation, fissiparious forces, undeniably, exist. The foreign policy dimension of the problem is that such forces find encouragement from foreign countries and foreign sources. The threat is not limited to claims articulated by neighbouring states such as Pakistan or China, but this threat forms the undercurrent of orientations in strategic policies of important countries such as the United States and the more cohesive nation-states and regional groupings. Maintaining durable peace and equilibrium in power equations would

be easier if the international state system did not have to cope with large geopolitical entities or states endowed with economic power and military strength competing with each other.

Whatever the superficial analysis and arguments about the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia may be, one substantial dimension of their fragmentation was the strategic planning and political encouragement rendered to the process by the Western powers led by the United States. Breaking up two pluralistic states with a sense of self, one of which was a superpower, was the practical application of the objective of politico-strategic domination or pre-eminent influence of the Western camp. The same motivation is reflected in the foreign policy approach of the United States and Russia in containing China and getting it subjected to multilateral international disciplines and regimes. The deeper motivation in generating pressure on Iraq, as well as in keeping it isolated, and in questioning the long-term viability of India remaining united is the same. Our foreign policy would have to assiduously create a regional atmosphere and equations with important power centres of the world which would prevent external encouragement to the inherent centrifugal tendencies affecting our polity. This step would involve an imaginative responsiveness to the aspirations of different segments of the Indian people and nurturing at least a non-adversarial, if not friendly, relationship with our neighbours and establishing a pattern of relations with important power centres of the world within the framework of which they will perceive a united India serving their broad economic and strategic interests. There will have to be decisive, even coercive, resistance to separatist forces originating from other countries and foreign agencies. This is not an *a priori* predication that India will continuously face a confrontationist situation with the international community. It is only emphasising that we must be aware of undercurrents of political realities in evolving international equations.

The second important objective of India's foreign policy would be to ensure an atmosphere of peace and stability in which India can focus on its economic development and can also cope with the complex problems affecting the well-being of our people. This

process would involve not only the fashioning of an appropriate domestic economic policy, but also the formulation of a "foreign economic policy" which would ensure the necessary financial, technological and foreign trade inputs to meet India's developmental requirements in the broadest sense of the term. In terms of present calculations, India needs an investment of roughly 80 billion US dollars per annum in the infrastructural sector of its economy (energy, surface transport, ports, power generation, telecommunications and so on). Moreover, foreign policy has a vital role to play in creating peace and stability in our region and ensuring India's image as an attractive economic partner in the process of global cooperation to meet the aforementioned objective. The technological dimensions of our foreign economic policy should particularly focus on enhancing technological potential and on increasing India's capacity for self-reliance in science and technology.

The third objective to be aimed at would be to create national defence capacities to protect India's unity and territorial integrity, a capacity which should primarily rely on our resources and our own technologies, but which should also be based on a balanced and sufficiently diversified pattern of external inputs in a manner wherein India does not become excessively dependent on one country or the other or one group of countries or the other. This precautionary step would involve calibrating our nuclear weaponisation and missile policies and policies related to the structuring of the three wings of our armed forces on lines which would be responsive to changing international power equations and technological developments. The overall aim should be to nurture and develop our strengths without going in for confrontation and without being isolated to the extent possible. This exercise would involve diplomatic skill, tact and flexibility of the highest order, in the context of the developing international situation, where the more important powers are aiming at fashioning a world order which will perpetuate their pre-eminent position.

The fourth objective would be to strengthen regional cooperation and to work for mutually beneficial equations between the South Asian and other regional groups and associations, so that regional

cooperation becomes an instrumentality not only for peace and stability but also for long-term security and economic well-being.

The fifth objective would be to strengthen the UN, its organs and its specialised agencies keeping in mind two goals: first, to enable the UN to truly reflect the interests and aspirations of the majority of its membership and, second, to restrict to the extent possible the UN's becoming an instrumentality of superpower policies. All issues affecting UN reforms should be dealt with, keeping these goals in mind. This task is not going to be easy, given present indications of UN reforms being undertaken in a selective and elitist manner based on the orientations of the more influential powers. India beseeching a permanent seat on the Security Council is not the solution. India should become strong enough in every respect and should attract sufficient voluntary support from the general membership of the UN and, based on this strength, it should become an influential voice at the UN. As this process would take time, in the interim phase, India should use its influence to make the UN more democratic by advocating the cause of greater representation for the smaller countries in the important organs of the UN and its agencies.

The sixth task would be to undertake the necessary organisational and institutional reforms in the Ministry of External Affairs and in the Indian Foreign Service to enable the foreign policy establishment of India to fulfil its required advisory and executive role to meet the following objectives. This initiative would involve the modernisation of recruitment methods, concentrating on area and functional specialisation, and facilitating lateral inclusion of specialists of different categories in the Foreign Service. These steps would also involve the creation of institutional mechanisms for interdepartmental coordination and consultation within the Government of India and between the Central Government of India and the state governments to meet foreign policy objectives at given points of time. Creation of a National Security Council and the post of a National Security Adviser with clearly defined responsibilities and powers should be an essential part of this exercise.

The seventh short- or medium-term task would be for India to focus on managing its relations with Pakistan and China, so that the inherent tensions in its relations with these countries do not affect our vital interests. Also, a special relationship with the United States, Russia and Japan should be fashioned in the context of their undoubted political influence and economic clout which is likely to last into the twenty-first century.

Having speculated on the short- and medium-term objectives and the required responses to meet them, it has to be emphasised that the nature of the challenges and India's responses to them would evolve in the context of broad trends in international relations. These trends at the end of the twentieth century have been touched upon in the earlier section of this chapter. The next obvious question would be: On what lines would these trends evolve in the first years of the twenty-first century? One can only speculate. The possibilities are that nation-states would have to reluctantly give up some aspects of their sovereignty, thereby facilitating international supervision and monitoring of economic, political, technological and military phenomena. The system of monitoring would be determined by the important powers and managed by them. The United Nations would be marginally strengthened and democratised, but it would function mostly under the influence of the United States and the Western democracies. But nation-states would still need their own economic and technological capacities as well as armed forces for safeguarding their vital national interests. The nuclear weapon states may agree to some kind of time-bound nuclear disarmament and, consequently, they would be more assertive in generating pressure on conducting inspections against countries which would not abide by their non-proliferation agenda. This possibility would be subject to the limitations that none of the nuclear weapon states would place their nuclear forces under UN supervision. None of them except China would be willing to commit themselves to "no first use" of their nuclear capacity. Most nations of the world would have signed the comprehensive test ban treaty and the fissile material cut-off treaty. There would be progressive pressure to eliminate the military missile systems and to prevent countries from missile development. Clinical

and biological weapons would have been effectively banned. Some regional groupings, specially the NAFTA, the NATO and the European Union would become more influential and effective instrumentalities of the foreign policies of those countries.

Russia and China would not be entirely happy with the aforementioned scheme of things and may be looking for new strategic equations to counter the unidimensional influence of the United States on international affairs. The US response may be to contain China through equations with Russia and/or India, while China and Russia may be interested in a similar equation with India to counter the USA's strategic pre-eminence.

If India remains united, becomes politically stable and economically and technologically strong, it could acquire a leverage in playing an important role in international relations. A contextual elaboration of the likely foreign policy and strategic orientations of the important powers would be relevant. The former Indian Chief of Army Staff, General K. Sundarji, in an article in the journal of the United Service Institution of India, in its October-December 1997 issue, has outlined these anticipated orientations, with which I fully agree. I, therefore, would like to reproduce his projections, which would throw up challenges to which India would have to respond appropriately.

According to General Sundarji, the aims of the US would be as follows:

- Avoid universal nuclear disarmament for as long as possible. Keep the US nuclear stockpile level comfortably high, not only to ensure US security, but [also] to obtain a domestic consensus.
- Prevent any country other than Russia obtaining large-scale missile capability of reaching Continental United States (CONUS) with land-based ballistic missiles.
- Keep the numbers and sophistication of Chinese ICBM as low as possible.
- Keep the numbers and sophistication of Chinese, French and British SSBN as low as possible. Prevent new entrants to the SSBN club.

- Accept no international commitment that would hinder the maintenance and enhancement of US technological pre-eminence.
- Prevent proliferation of WMD, local arms races and regional wars.
- Retain US freedom to use conventional forces to influence regional situations for safeguarding US interests, without any threat to the forward deployed US forces from WMD or regional powers. This is to be achieved by three means: first, by preventing the emergence of new regional nuclear powers; second, by nuclear deterrence, reinforced by protecting forward deployed forces from regional nuclear attack by the deployment of Global Protection against Limited Strikes (GPALS) and the like; third, deter chemical attacks from regional powers by retaining the right to retaliate with nuclear weapons; this last requirement would demand that the US should not subscribe to a "No First Strike" doctrine.
- Hedge against the possibility of Russian expansionism westwards into Europe by enlarging NATO to include the erstwhile East European members of the Soviet empire, and by support to Ukraine.
- Hedge against a resurgent China in Asia and Pacific region by reworking the US-Japan security arrangement for the next century, as the first step, and next consider getting India also into the act of containment of China.

The Chinese aims would be as follows:

- As a large, populous country with an ancient civilisation, China wants to be in the major league of world powers, by right, and not accepted grudgingly as an 'also ran'. With the voluntary reduction of Russian and US nuclear stockpiles and the accelerating improvement in the Chinese economy, becoming near coequal in nuclear arsenals generally, if not yet in total military terms, is seen as feasible.

- Keep the number of nuclear weapon powers in the world restricted to the present five, but not make common cause with the USA in this regard, if that country thwarts Chinese ambitions of becoming gradually coequal. The enlargement of the nuclear club might serve Chinese tactical aims of obtaining better leverage *vis-à-vis* the USA. The Indian and Japanese nuclear stance will have much weight in this regard. The Japanese would be conditioned by the North Korean or a united Korean nuclear weapons capability. This could colour Chinese attitudes to North Korean nuclear ambitions.
- If the USA bullies China on issues such as human rights, unfair trade practices or wanting the whole world to abide by the domestic legislation of the USA, the Chinese will aim at getting leverage against the USA by cultivating closer trade ties with West European powers. Similarly, in the geopolitical sphere, in order to tilt the balance of power in its favour in Asia, China is likely to cultivate Russia and India to counterbalance the USA.

The aims of Pakistan would be as follows:

- Maintain a "non-weaponised" and non-deployed minimum nuclear deterrent to counter India's superior conventional power potential.
- Resist all attempts to force it to sign the NPT, or accept "capping" and "roll-back" of its nuclear weapons capability. It may claim that it would do so if India also goes along. This would be a bargaining ploy, in the full confidence that India would never agree unless it is a non-discriminatory universal regime. (If one supposes that India agrees to a bilateral Indo-Pak dismantling of nuclear weapons capability, and Pakistan also does so, Pakistan will lose the level playing field that it has obtained and will be hard put to keep up a balance with India's conventional forces; such an agreement may put India at China's mercy and hence India's refusal to accept a bilateral approach to nuclear restraint is taken for granted by Pakistan.)
- Maintain an adversarial posture against India and work for an early pro-Pakistan solution of the Kashmir problem by stepped

up sponsored insurgency and international pressure. Only if after prolonged and frantic efforts they fail in this aim, and it also results in poor economic performance and domestic political turbulence, would a cooperative arrangement with India be considered.

- Continue to work for the Balkanisation of the Indian Union by providing clandestine support to all secessionist Indian groups, as long as they exist, whether these are from the North, South, East or West of India. Many in Pakistan would like to see the emergence of many independent states out of the Indian Union, leaving behind only a rump constituted by the Hindi-speaking heartland forming the future "India". The permanent solution for the bullfrog (Pakistan), which cannot possibly become a bull (India), is to convert the Indian bull into a bullfrog!

What should be India's responses to the aforementioned trends? First and foremost should be a focus on dealing with macro-level problems such as population control, environment management and economic development. Creating a strong Indian economy in the mainstream of international economic trends would lay the foundation for resisting intrusive international pressure or competition. India should acquire limited nuclear weapons and IRBM capacities to a level where regional or global powers would accept that generating pressure on India would not be worthwhile. The Indian army, air force and navy should be modernised, strengthened and endowed with sufficiently advanced weapons systems which would prevent military actions of the type which Iran and Iraq faced in the 1980s and 1990s. India should retain the freedom of option to adjust to external strategic threats and economic challenges detrimental to its interests.

India, therefore, would face a complex world in the twenty-first century in which it has to survive with just a little over 50 years of experience as a modern nation-state. This survival has to be ensured in the context of the abiding reality in international relations that governments of great and influential powers command resources and military strengths that they use primarily to fulfil their perceived interests. As far as the international order consists of nation-states

which act in terms of their institutional strengths, economic resources and technological capacities, foreign relations will remain a competitive phenomenon, occasionally prone to confrontations. India's foreign policy, therefore, has to predicate itself on realpolitik rather than on purely moral considerations, or an idealistic worldview, however desirable the latter may be. Foreign policy experts towards the end of the twentieth century have asserted that the future of foreign relations depends on how countries and their leaders will cope with five new imperatives in the international situation. First, a nuclear war is unthinkable. Second, everything must be done to dispel suspicion and nurture international trust and security, even when confronted with profound hostility or radical contradictions. This implies a willingness to maintain communications and nurture cooperation at every possible level, to the extent possible. Third, despite the requirements of adjusting to realpolitik, states should have sufficient faith in moral values to be convinced that they do not need war and military conflict to survive and flourish. Fourth, while deterrence or balance of terror provides temporary peace and stability, in fundamental terms, the arrangement is questionable. And fifth, the collective commitment to evolve an international mindset which will endeavour to create a fair and just world order should animate the foreign policies of all countries. A principled and moral response to these unexceptional imperatives should be the overarching purpose of India's foreign policy in the twenty-first century but it is not entirely possible. So in the interim phase, Indian foreign policy will have to deal with continuing contradictions between the amoral ground realities of world politics and the moral norms which we and the international community aim at. The endeavour would remain that of reconciling responses to the international situation, as it is likely to be, and the aspirations of what the situation should be in moral terms. Cohesion and purposiveness in our foreign policy in dealing with this multidimensional dilemma would depend entirely on the creation of a national consensus based on enlightened public opinion responsive to our changing national interests in a continuously changing world.

16

China and South Asia: Post-Pokhran II

The dramatic event of India's conducting a series of nuclear tests on 11 and 13 May 1998 and declaring itself a nuclear weapons state has changed the terms of reference of China's relations with South Asian countries qualitatively. The statements of the Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes describing China as "a major threat" even before the tests and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's mentioning the Chinese threat as an impulse for India's nuclear weaponisation in his letters to the heads of government of nuclear weapons states has changed the gradually and painfully created atmosphere of stability and tranquility in the South Asian region.

Regretfully, Sino-Indian relations have deteriorated precipitously after the nuclear tests, and the tension between the two countries affects the security of all the countries of the region. The setback to the process of normalisation of relations between India and China is a regrettable development which could have been avoided if India's spokesmen, notwithstanding India's tests, had been more reticent and measured and if the Chinese reaction had been more patient. What has instead happened is that the strategic balance in the region

has undergone a major change about which China has reservations—a change which India could not avoid in terms of its long-term regional strategic interests.

It is worth considering whether India's security concerns *vis-à-vis* China are an articulation of an undercurrent of views that exist about China among the countries of both South and South-East Asia. Are there deep and as yet not fully articulated concerns about China in this region, and are they valid?

The recent controversies with regard to India's relations with China caused by somewhat impulsive, and one is constrained to say, ill-considered statements by the Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes about China, make it pertinent to undertake a panoramic examination of China's relations with South Asian and South-East Asian countries, and future prospects of such relations, to the extent possible. George Fernandes expressing the view that China is threat number one, as far as India is concerned is questionable in terms of impending possibilities and in terms of current political perspectives. However, the point worth considering is whether he has articulated and expressed undercurrents of views about China, amongst the South and South-East Asian countries. The question is also whether these apprehensions about China are valid.

Beijing's strategic views and, more particularly, its attitudes towards South Asian and South-East Asian countries, without doubt, are based on China's domestic political predicaments and China's perceptions about likely developments in regional politics and power equations. These views and attitudes are also influenced by China's own military and technological capacities. These are macro-level predications from which one has to proceed towards further analysis. What then is the domestic political predicament of China? What are the future prospects? China has undergone profound transformations over the last two and a half decades. It has undertaken extensive economic modernisation and reforms successfully. The fifth to the ninth sessions of the National People's Congress, beginning from the early 1980s and ending in the spring of 1998 guided and supervised these changes under the leadership, first of Deng Xiaoping and later of Jiang Zemin and Li Peng. The

governing principle of this change was a measured and effective "perestroika" with a firm rejection of "glasnost". Economic liberalisation along with political discipline and cohesion were the terms of reference of the transformation which China has undergone and is undergoing. The consequence has been China's emergence as the most attractive market and economic partner in Asia in the process of globalisation. The second characteristic of the Chinese domestic situation has been the smooth and efficient manner in which the transitions in the power structure were managed.

The first struggle for succession occurred in June 1989 during the Tiananmen Square agitation which was overcome by drastic means. The orthodox disciplinarian elements of the party overcame orientations towards liberalism and democracy. Jiang Zemin consolidated his position within the party gradually throughout the decade of 1990s, ultimately emerging as undisputed leader of the party and the government by 1996. Though the groundswell for democratic restructuring of the Chinese polity was neutralised, China gained internal stability, political cohesion and domestic discipline. The present top leadership primarily consisting of Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji (Prime Minister) is fully and effectively in command of the complex Chinese polity. The impression in the international community is that China is a politically stable country, it is an attractive economic partner, it is an effective technological and military power and that it has to be acknowledged as one of the major power centres, capable of influencing international relations. There are solid grounds for China being so acknowledged. It has shown an average annual growth of 9 to 11 per cent per annum over the last decade. It has controlled both inflationary and recessionary pressures on its economy. The country's quality of life index shows 90 to 95 per cent literacy, one of the largest health care and water conservation programmes and considerable achievements in the fields of child care and women's welfare. China's steel output exceeds a hundred million metric tonnes. It has an installed power-generating capacity of 250 million KW. In overall terms, China's economic performance is rated as one of the most efficient and productive amongst the developing countries. China is

a superpower in terms of nuclear weapons and missiles capacities. It is endowed with trained technological manpower in all fields of science and technology. The scientific temper and innovative capacity of China can be gauged from the fact that over 2000 patents have been granted for new inventions to Chinese scientists and entrepreneurs over the last eight to ten years. Though its population stands at about 1.2 billion at present, the population control programme has become effective. China's population is expected to stabilise between 1.5 to 1.7 billion by the year 2025. While this is the positive side of the picture, China's sense of self and its world view are subject to some negative characteristics also. There is a growing geographical economic imbalance in the levels of development and levels of prosperity between different regions of China. While regions around the special economic zones, like Shanghai, Pudong, Hong Kong and Guandung have prospered, achieving a higher standard of living and technological development, northern, north-western and north-central China remain economically backward. The disparity in the levels of prosperity and development among different regions of China has generated some political tensions which is acknowledged as a major and critical future challenge to the stability of the country by Chinese leaders themselves. Secondly, there are simmering ethno-linguistic, religious and cultural centrifugal forces within China which can affect Chinese territorial integrity and unity. The Muslim population of China, the Tibetans and the minority ethnic group in "Xinjiang" and other parts of north-western China have shown trends of alienation which the Chinese Government has to tackle. China also faces prospects of food shortages and large-scale unemployment in the beginning decades of the twenty-first century, according to the economic experts of the multilateral financial institutions.

The passing away of the senior communist leadership, which had participated in the "Long March" and emerged victorious through the travails of the Chinese civil war and the Second World War, has created a new need, for forging a new equilibrium between the People's Liberation Army and the Chinese Communist Party. The older leadership was semi-military in itself because it consisted of

both political leaders and military campaigners. This is not the case with the new Chinese political leadership, which is a major exercise in domestic political engineering which China is engaged in.

These are the factors influencing China's attitudes and policies towards the world at large and towards its South and South-East Asian neighbours in particular. Policy statements and objectively ascertainable realities of China's foreign policy, lead one to the conclusion that China's external orientations are subject to the following objectives/motivations:

At present China wishes to concentrate primarily on domestic political consolidation and economic development. The focus is inwards.

It is the Chinese assessment that an atmosphere of stability and peace around China is essential to meet its high priority objectives of domestic stability and development.

China, therefore, desires a practical, cooperative working relationship with all its neighbours and other important power centres of the world like the United States, Russia, West Europe and Japan. China is convinced that its destiny is that of becoming a world power with superpower status. Therefore, it will continue to build its technological and defence capacities with a view to effectively countering external challenges from other technologically advanced countries.

China is interested in supporting and strengthening the United Nations as far as the UN functions as an instrumentality supportive of China's concerns and China's international expectations. China is in favour of horizontal non-proliferation and elimination of weapons of mass destruction. China is not at ease with an international order in which the United States and the West remain dominant politico-military influences on international relations.

Both in proof of its adherence to the cause of peace and its desire to prevent the existing nuclear powers from dominating the world scene, China has unilaterally declared its commitment to no-first-use of nuclear weapons, particularly against non-nuclear weapons states, and has urged other nuclear weapons powers to make a similar commitment, an appeal which has not been accepted by them.

China adheres to the basic principles of its foreign policy of not interfering in the affairs of any other country and being absolutely firm and decisive about protecting its own national interests.

It is in this overall framework that one has to survey China's relations with its South Asian and South-East Asian neighbours. Except with Pakistan and Sri Lanka, China's relations with India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar have been chequered and characterised by ups and downs. Its relations with practically all the South-East Asian countries stretching from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to Philippines have been uneasy due to the burdens of history. The purpose here is not to proceed with a factually detailed description of China's relations with each of these countries. The objective is to describe these relations in broad strategic terms and general political orientations. China, due to its distances from the Soviet Union from the early 1960s, had been opposed to Soviet influence in Central Asia and therefore had cultivated Pakistan and has developed a strong political, defence and economic relationship with that country. They are based on profound strategic considerations affecting both Pakistan and China. China opposed the Soviet-supported revolution in Afghanistan but now has reservations about the ongoing civil war there and about religious extremism becoming dominant in the power structure of Afghanistan.

After the emotive friendship of the early 1950s, Sino-Indian relations have had many ups and downs. Chinese territorial claims against India, rejected by the latter, evolved into a boundary dispute which led to a war; the issue still remains unresolved. China is in occupation of between 70,000 to 80,000 square kilometers of Indian territory according to Indian claims. Despite the bitterness following the Sino-Indian war, China's relations with India were gradually being brought on track from 1988 onwards. Both the Chinese and Indian leaderships agreed, from the late 1970s onwards, that since the boundary dispute was complex and could not be resolved easily, India and China should nurture cooperative relations in various spheres and build up an atmosphere which will enable the settlement of the boundary dispute through political negotiations on the basis of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation.

The period between 1991 and 1994 witnessed a qualitative improvement in Sino-Indian relations. Both countries signed an agreement in September 1993 to stabilise the atmosphere along the line of actual control and to maintain peace and tranquillity on both sides of this line. It was also agreed to pull back and reduce military forces on both sides of the line and to implement mutual confidence-building measures which would bring stability in the relations between the two countries. It was agreed that once the situation stabilised, China and India would move forward to settle the boundary question, trying to overcome past rigid attitudes and prejudices. This whole process has now been put in jeopardy by the statements of the Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes who declared China as "number one threat" to India's security in a public speech on 2 May 1998. These statements have evoked a strong and negative Chinese response, as was to be expected. None of the facts quoted by George Fernandes in support of his assertion were new or recent developments. India was aware of China's military strengths and missile deployments in Tibet. India was aware of Chinese defence and economic cooperation with Myanmar and Pakistan. Both India and China, while being aware of the implication of this phenomenon, were consciously trying to build a working relationship insulated from the likely pressures generated by Chinese equations with India's neighbours. Fernandes' impulsive and off-the-cuff condemnation of China, which definitely does not represent the considered policy of the BJP Government, has acted as a setback to Sino-Indian relations. It will take some purposive and sincere efforts on the part of both China and India to overcome the unnecessary and avoidable crisis created by George Fernandes' outburst.

The tensions in China's relations with Nepal and Bhutan are a byproduct of India's relations with both these countries and the apprehensions of both China and India, about either of them becoming excessively influential in Nepal and Bhutan. While Nepal has shown a tendency to play off China against India and India against China off and on, Bhutan, being more dependent and closer to India has a tenuous relationship with China.

The political controversies affecting Tibet are a major factor influencing China's relations with India, Nepal and Bhutan. Tibetan exiles and refugees in these three countries are becoming increasingly vocal in their agitation against China. All the three countries, particularly India, recognised Tibet as an autonomous part of the People's Republic of China. While exiled Tibetans are seeking support from motivated segments of the international community and are agitating for separation and independence, others are demanding greater autonomy and the return of Dalai Lama to Tibet with the grant of appropriate status and religious authority to him. This is a bit of an oversimplification of the Tibetan issue but these are the broad contours of the controversy. The Chinese Government is concerned about India being used as a base for such separatist activities and Bhutan and Nepal becoming part of this process. It is a politically sensitive imbroglio, for which China, on the one hand, and India, Nepal and Bhutan, on the other, have to find a just compromise as it involves the territorial integrity of China and the stability of political relations between China and these important South Asian countries.

China had opposed the Bangladesh liberation but after the initial bitterness, the Bangladesh Government has assiduously cultivated China on the one hand and Pakistan on the other to balance off the politically overwhelming influence by India which landlocks that country on three sides. Bangladeshi perceptions contribute to their stable and good relationship with China. It must also be mentioned at this point of narration that, as far as Bangladesh was part of Pakistan and as far as India's relations remained distant with the Burmese Government of Ne Win, China had given general support to the separatist groups of Nagas and Mizos and other ethnic communities desiring separation from India. But with the gradual normalisation of relations between India and China, China withdrew this support to the secessionists which has been a positive development from India's point of view.

China's relations with Myanmar are particularly close now. China has given defence assistance to Myanmar to the value of two billion dollars over the last decade, according to some reports.

The Chinese have been given some visiting facilities to the Coco Island naval base in south-eastern Myanmar. China has established a politico-strategic equation with Myanmar which impinges on the security environment of both South Asia and South-East Asia. The relations between China and the countries of South-East Asia, and the ASEAN region, have been complex and turbulent. The Chinese had supported the communist movement in Malaysia, and Indonesia, which evoked a firmly negative political and military response from these countries over the last four decades. In a manner, the creation of ASEAN, with a general security and political umbrella provided by the US, Japan and Australia could in fact have been a reaction to Chinese assertive postures *vis-à-vis* the region.

In more recent years, the Chinese territorial claims on coastal seas and islands have been a cause of apprehension as well as tension between China and some of the South-East Asian countries. The Chinese invasion of Vietnam in February/March 1979 was the first signal of Chinese acquisitive postures *vis-à-vis* the region. In the decades of the 1990s, China has laid claims to islands in the South China Sea and to islands adjacent to Vietnam stretching down to Indonesia and even the Philippines. While China has a normal political and economic relationship with all the countries in the region, there is an undercurrent of apprehension about China's undoubted military might and its traditional collective nationalistic and assertive mindset, regarding peoples and territories which Beijing claims as integral to the Chinese collective identity. This is a logical apprehension given the Chinese stance on Hong Kong which has been brought to a successful culmination from the Chinese point of view and China's declared intentions regarding Macao and Taiwan.

Some interesting perceptions about China's Asian vision merit mention. First, China has a sense of destiny about being a predominant Asian power in the 21st century. Within the framework of this aspiration, China considers South and South East Asia as potential areas of Chinese influence. China perhaps does not have the same intensities about central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union which due to ethnic, and religious characteristics seem more related to other cultural and civilisational groups in China's

eyes. China does not consider India or Indonesia as challengers to the role which it desires, though it is conscious that China should sustain its position at a higher level of political influence, military, strategic and technological capacities, compared to India and Indonesia. China would also like to develop equations with Asian countries further afield like Iran and others in the Gulf to nurture its position as a balancing centre of power *vis-à-vis* the power centres of the US, West Europe and the Russian Federation as well as in relation to Japan.

Coming to the immediate interests of India, namely, subcontinental Asia, China would continue to have a close relationship with Pakistan and will have a benign and positive attitude towards Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and, to a limited extent, with Bhutan (this is because of the present close relations between Bhutan and India). China's relations with India will remain complex and tenuous. Even if the boundary dispute is resolved, the memories of 1962 will take a long time to fade from the minds of the Indians and Chinese.

What is necessary for stability and development for the peoples of South Asia is a practical and stable working relationship between India and China; both sides should make every effort to avoid drifting back into a state of confrontation or acrimony based purely on past memories and speculative apprehensions. Such a functional political and strategic equilibrium between India and China is achievable only if New Delhi also deals with Beijing from a position of sufficient stability and strength in every respect. The other countries of South Asia can contribute to this process by encouraging India and China to sustain the efforts towards developing normal bilateral relations and being supportive of these relations. As Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar have borders with both China and India, they can play a specially positive role in this process. The guiding principle to managing the asymmetry between China and other Asian countries should be that of being aware of the competitive and/or confrontationist potentialities of the national psyche of countries like India and China and to temper them through regional processes of integrated political and economic cooperation.

I have referred to the prospects of India-Pakistan relations, after both countries conducted their nuclear tests in May in Chapter 17. There is a Chinese dimension to Pakistan's nuclear weaponisation which impacts on Indian policies. There are confirmed indications that Pakistan's nuclear tests on the 28 and 30 May 1998, were possible because of Chinese assistance. The prospect of a China-Pakistan defence and nuclear strategic nexus assumes critical dimensions for India's defence planning, especially so in the context of the recent deterioration in Sino-Indian relations which India could have avoided. India has a particularly complex task of bringing back its relations with China on back track. Any long-term antagonism between China and India would obviously have a very negative impact on Asian peace and stability.

17

India as a Nuclear Weapons Power

The complete manuscript of this book (or so I thought) had gone to the publishers late in March 1998. I had a general sense of satisfaction that I had covered all major developments in India's foreign policy over the last 50 years. But then as the Greek philosopher Thracymacus observed sagaciously nearly a millennium ago: "Presuming certainties in political processes is the profoundest mistake in human affairs." As if to prove Thracymacus right, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, announced on the afternoon of 11 May 1998 that India had conducted three nuclear tests, including a thermonuclear test a little after 3 p.m. on that date. India conducted two more subkiloton nuclear device tests on 13 May. India had crossed the nuclear Rubicon, the *Lakshman Rekha*, so to say, of reticences regarding nuclear weaponisation to assert and affirm its position as a nuclear weapons power.

I have referred to the evolution of India's stand on nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control policies in the earlier chapters of this book, particularly in Chapter 11. Significant non-proliferation and disarmament trends which impacted on, and

influenced, India's nuclear policies up to 1997 have been covered in different sections of this book. The purpose of adding this chapter on the implications of the second series of Indian nuclear tests conducted at Pokhran (in Rajasthan) in May 1998 is to focus attention on the politically radical foreign and defence policy decision that the Government of India took and on the consequential transformation of India's strategic position and political credibility in the international community. It would be sufficient to limit the analysis in this chapter to more recent developments leading to India's overt nuclear weaponisation. The reasons for India's concretising its nuclear weapon options, in my assessment, are broadly the following.

First and foremost, the progressively deteriorating security environment that India faces and has faced since the late 1980s activated the leaders to go nuclear. Second, the incremental and definitive prospects of restrictive and discriminatory international regimes being put in place which would have not just stifled but would also have put a complete stop to India realising its potential in the fields of space and nuclear technologies spurred India to exercise the nuclear option. Third, India was averse to adjusting to a new international strategic and technological order in which the existing five nuclear weapons states would remain a dominating factor for a prolonged period of time. Fourth, India required a long-term and sophisticated defence capacity in the context of its own post-independence experience of its territorial integrity being threatened more than once. Fifth, India took note of the fact that other nuclear weapons capable states, which were subjected to restrictive pressures, either overcame the pressures by becoming nuclear weapon powers themselves, such as France and China, or they succumbed to international pressure and their nuclear technological capacities (in terms of self-reliance) were capped, rolled back and eliminated as in the case of Argentina, South Africa and Brazil. India decided to adopt the first option to overcome these pressures.

The first criticism levelled against India is that by conducting these tests it has abandoned its unqualified commitment *not* to acquire

nuclear weapons and missile capacities. This is not true. New Delhi had noted the discriminatory orientations of the nuclear weapon powers at the time of the very inception of India's own nuclear programmes. Political and technological elements of the statute on the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), discussed at the conference to finalise this statute in 1957, gave clear indications of its prospective discriminatory orientations. India was alert to the negative prospects and articulated its reservations. India, while abjuring the acquisition of nuclear weapons, despite suggestions to the contrary by the US in 1963, took note of the Chinese nuclear weaponisation in 1964, and decided in response that it (India) should build up infrastructural capacities for a nuclear weapons deterrent of its own. India's building a plutonium processing plant in 1964 was the affirmation of this intention. India's refusal to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) in 1967-68 and India's conducting the peaceful nuclear explosion test at Pokhran on 18 May 1974 were clear signals that it was aiming at acquiring basic nuclear weapons capacities and that it would create this capacity and keep this option open to be exercised as and when the country's security concerns required it.

The post-1974 Pokhran I reactions of the nuclear weapons powers led by the United States heightened India's alertness and sensitivity about a restrictive non-proliferation policy being evolved to foreclose India's nuclear options. Multilateral technical discussions, on safeguards procedures, and transfer of technology policies of the nuclear weapons states and the advanced industrial countries changed the very definition of non-proliferation which was initially aimed only at preventing acquisition and proliferation of nuclear weapons. The definition of proliferation was extended to cover all related technologies. So were the objectives of safeguards changed to monitor and supervise nuclear and space technologies being used for peaceful purposes. This approach was embodied in the concept of full-scope safeguards of the IAEA which India consistently opposed. Full-scope safeguards were also going to be discriminatory, as these were not applicable to the facilities and laboratories of the nuclear weapon states.

If one recalls the provisions of the 1978 Nuclear Regulatory Act of the USA, its primary target was to control and diminish India's nuclear, technological and defence capacities. The deleterious impact that agreements on regional and subregional nuclear weapons-free zones had on the nuclear self-reliance capacities of important countries like Brazil and Argentina (e.g., the Treaty of Tlatlalco) was also taken serious note of by Indian defence and strategic planners. India was also convinced that regional and subregional nuclear-free zones being established was irrelevant in terms of the objectives of non-proliferation, especially when the nuclear weapons had a global reach and more so when most of the regions had at least one nuclear weapons power within the region itself.

India also noted that the discriminatory terms of reference governing the NPT remained the guiding principle of all international regimes being put in place, whether it was the missile control technology regime, the comprehensive test ban treaty, or the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty.

In more recent times, since the beginning of the 1990s, the pressure exerted on South Africa to totally give up its nuclear weapons options, the moment a black African majority Government came to power in that country, and the enormous pressure exerted on, and financial incentives running into over a billion dollars given to, Ukraine to give up its nuclear weapons capacities had a clear political message for India. The end of the Cold War and the end of the US-Soviet confrontation did not change the discriminatory and self-aggrandising attitude of the nuclear weapons powers on non-proliferation issues. This static and self-serving approach of the nuclear weapon states was manifested in all the discussions related to non-proliferation of every category held after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. India, consequently, had to fashion a practical and effective (though reticent and disciplined) deterrent-oriented response to this evolving situation. This was the objective that India sought to fulfil by conducting nuclear tests in May 1998.

The purpose of recalling these trends in more recent history is to underline the fact that India's nuclear policies have not developed in a vacuum. It was essentially a graduated and measured response to international non-proliferation trends which India perceived as a threat to its long-term security interests. It is the same motivation which made India commence its missile development programme which was given a pronounced impetus by Rajiv Gandhi from 1984 to 1989, a process which has continued to date.

To focus attention on the more recent qualitative deterioration in the regional security environment, the threat from Pakistan is of primary importance to India. Conventional wisdom that Pakistan commenced its clandestine nuclear and missile weaponisation programme only *after* the Indian nuclear test of 1974 is factually incorrect. In their book *Islamic Bomb*, Steve Wiessman and Herbert Krosney (Vision Books, Delhi, 1981) assert that right since the mid-1950s, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (when he became a minister in Ayub Khan's cabinet) was an advocate of Pakistan developing nuclear weapons capacity. Pakistan's military defeat in 1971 strengthened Bhutto's conviction. He took the decision to nuclearly weaponise Pakistan two years *before* India's 1974 tests in Pokhran. His articulated logic was that Pakistan should have such an overwhelming superiority in non-conventional weapons that India would never be able to defeat Pakistan in conventional warfare. Pakistan consistently increased its nuclear weapons and missiles capacities from 1972 onwards. By 1987, Pakistan was in possession of a limited number of nuclear devices. During 1987 and 1988, Pakistan improved its military missile arsenal, with Chinese help, culminating in a situation where, in between 1996 and 1997, senior Pakistani political and military figures asserted that they were capable of adopting a nuclear and missile posture against India. The firing of the potential IRBM missile, Ghauri, in April 1998 and the claims of the creator of the Pakistani nuclear weapons programme, Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan, that Pakistan had an effective military nuclear arsenal, could not be ignored by India. Regardless of marginal scepticisms and doubts expressed by

experts in India and abroad about Pakistan's capacities, the following facts have to be taken note of.

Pakistan today has 14 laboratories and nuclear facilities at Chagai Hills, Kundian, Chashma, Lakki, Issakhel, Wah, Golra Sharief, Rawalpindi, Sihala, Kahuta, Khushab, Lahore, Multan and Dehra Gazi Khan. These facilities include tritium and uranium enrichment plants, mining facilities, a laboratory for uranium hexafluoride conversion, weapons-manufacturing centres, fuel fabrication centres, nuclear testing facilities, heavy water-manufacturing facilities, plutonium-reprocessing facilities, milling facilities, nuclear reactors and a well-equipped research and development capacity.

One does not have to go into such detail about Chinese nuclear and missile capacities which have evolved since 1964 and which have made China an accepted and acknowledged member of the nuclear weapon powers club. Over the years the United States has conducted 1032 nuclear tests, Russia 715, France 210, the UK 45 and China 45. France and China conducted these nuclear tests as late as 1996 just as the comprehensive test ban treaty was being finalised. As of May 1998, the United States possess 12,070 nuclear warheads, Russia 22,500, France 500, UK 380 and China 450. Even if the SALT and START treaties get finalised and implemented, the US would retain about 10,000 nuclear weapons, 3500 strategic, 1000 tactical and 5500 warheads in reserve till the year 2007. The Russians will retain 11,000 nuclear weapons, 3500 strategic, 2500 tactical and 5000 warheads in reserve. There would be no significant qualitative change in the numbers or quality of the nuclear arsenals of the three other nuclear weapons powers, France, the UK and China. Indian threat perceptions in the context of this international weapons environment, stretching well into the first decade of the twenty-first century, are realistic and the response structured by India in terms of becoming a nuclear weapons state is logical not just in terms of national interests, but also in terms of international precedents. The UK and France need not have become nuclear weapons powers which they did despite having a guaranteed nuclear security umbrella provided by the USA and also by NATO.

Israel's non-declared nuclear weapons status has occurred despite security guarantees from the United States to it. The UK, France and Israel became nuclear weapons powers with encouragement from the United States. It was the logic of the Cold War which led to the imperative for self-reliance and of allowing one's allies to strengthen themselves (on the part of the US) which created this phenomenon. China and North Korea acquiring nuclear weapons capacities have more or less the same logic based on Beijing's apprehensions about the US and Russia at different points of time during the last 50 years. South Africa's nuclear weapons status was sustained and supported till Dr. Nelson Mandela came to power. A black majority democratic regime could not be trusted with capacities as the white racist Pretoria regime had been. One cannot forget the ethno-racist logic of South Africa being persuaded to give up its nuclear weapons status not only because black South Africa may not have been a reliable strategic ally but also because of an unarticulated feeling that such sophisticated technology could not be handed over to a majority of Africans in South Africa. The West felt that they (black Africans) should not acquire this competence or knowledge. This is regardless of the African National Congress's opposition to nuclear weapons; one reason for the ANC's pro-non-proliferation stand could be its objection to the white racist regime having such power.

Before proceeding to the event-specific analysis of India's nuclear tests and its ramifications, I would like to indulge in a diversion about this concept of "rogue states" and irresponsible states which has become part of the lexicon of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control discussions. This concept was introduced by the industrially advanced countries led by the US. Countries such as Libya, Iraq, Iran, North Korea and, to some extent, Syria have qualified for this term. Now India and Pakistan are potential candidates to merit such description.

The objective criteria for the irresponsible use of weapons of mass destruction are the following: (1) If such a weapon is used by one country against another which does not have similar

weapons of mass destruction (WMD). (2) If the WMD-possessing country uses such a weapon without provocation or genuine military requirement. (3) If an WMD-equipped country uses such weapons against a defenceless civilian population. If a country meets these three criteria, it merits the description of being irresponsible. It should be clarified that one does not hold a brief for the adventurist and impulsively violent policies of President Saddam Hussain or Colonel Muammar Gaddafi. But if the foregoing criteria are objectively applied, there has been only one case when these criteria were fulfilled without any inhibition or compunctions. It was the US which met these criteria of irresponsibility when it bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, towards the end of the Second World War (August 1945). Perhaps the nuclear weapons states should occasionally look into the mirror before applying such adjectives to other states and using them as an excuse to stifle their sovereignty and their freedom of option to ensure their security. India views the admonition administered to it on the subject of non-proliferation with legitimate scepticism in the foregoing context, especially keeping in mind its own discipline and restraint in the matter.

Let me return to the main story. The new BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) Government at New Delhi took the politically radical and dramatic step of conducting five nuclear tests, three on 11 May and two more on 13 May 1998. These tests included one 45 kiloton thermonuclear test and two subcritical subkiloton tests. India asserted its nuclear weapons capacities overtly and declared itself a nuclear weapons state. It can now be mentioned (which I had not mentioned in the earlier portions of the book) that Prime Minister Narasimha Rao was quite close to conducting a nuclear test towards the end of 1995. But various external and domestic pressures inhibited him.

The period between the summer of 1994 and the end of 1997 saw the finalisation of the comprehensive test ban treaty despite India's principled and rational reservations about its discriminatory nature. The discriminatory elements in the CTBT were that, first of all, it legitimised the existing nuclear weapons states possessing

nuclear weapons. Secondly, the treaty allowed them to retain their nuclear weapons arsenals and also improve them indefinitely. Thirdly, it did not stipulate any time-bound programme for nuclear weapons states to destroy their weapons and stockpiles. Fourthly, it imposed permanent limitations not only on the security options of the developing countries but also on their technological potentialities in the sphere of the utilisation of nuclear energy. In addition to these elements, the USA has put in a number of reservations on various clauses of the CTBT. Apart from the CTBT, a fissile material cut-off treaty was being evolved to extend the discriminatory restrictions on nuclear technological capacities of developing countries such as India. There was also a general orientation to impose additional inequitable discriminatory regimes on the transfer and development of dual use technologies by developing countries.

The foregoing macro-level trends compounded by the deteriorating regional security environment compelled India to move from ambiguity to definiteness, from potentialities to operational realisation, in the sphere of nuclear and missile weaponisation. The BJP Government's conducting nuclear tests and announcing its intention to make nuclear weapons deployable have introduced a new dynamics in international strategic equations. It is, therefore, relevant to examine the rationale and justification of India's nuclear weaponisation, its ramifications and the manner in which India can or should cope with interim negative consequences that it will face.

India's conducting thermonuclear and nuclear tests has the following implications.

First, India has affirmed to itself and confirmed to the rest of the world its status as a full-fledged nuclear weapon state. Secondly, these tests confirm the sophisticated level of Indian technological capacities in the spheres of high-energy physics and nuclear engineering, with capacities for computer simulation and subcritical tests in future. Thirdly, India has acquired a strategic position as a balancing factor both in regional and international power equations. Fourthly, regardless of the intransigence of the five nuclear weapon powers, objective terms of reference for future arms control and

disarmament processes stand changed with the principle of discriminatory restrictions facing a question mark.

International reactions to the radical politico-strategic initiative taken by India have been varied. Most of them are overwhelmingly negative. The first and foremost concern of New Delhi in this post-nuclear testing phase of India's foreign relations is to convince the international community that India's overtly declaring its nuclear weapons capacity and confirming it by operational experiments are only to meet India's security requirements, and, secondly, that this capacity will be managed with restraint and responsibility, posing no threat to peace and stability.

A number of questions have been raised about the Government of India's decision to go nuclear in terms of its defence capacities. They need answers. The first question asked was: Why did India end its ambiguity and carry out the tests? The answer simply lies with reference to the security environment around India stretching from Diego Garcia in the west in an encircling arc right up to Pakistan, the Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz. There are a number of countries with a nuclear weapon presence in this entire region, one of which, Pakistan, has threatened the use of its nuclear and missile capacities against India more than once. Pakistan's relations with other nuclear weapon powers such as China and the USA are a factor which cannot be ignored by India. Secondly, the conducting of tests was necessary for India to ascertain for itself what its capacities were and to make the Indian public generally aware of these capacities and to impart to them a sense of confidence. The second question asked is about the timing of these tests. Why did India go in for these tests at this point of time in 1998? The reasons were twofold. First, the conducting of these tests was necessary for technological and operational reasons, the objective being to lay the foundations for India to develop a deployable deterrent capacity against potential threats. India had already delayed this process; a delay which had affected its security. Secondly, apart from having to break out of the straitjacket of punitive and discriminatory stipulations which would have become operational under the CTBT by the end of 1999, these

stipulations would have been further compounded by the fissile material cut-off treaty coming up for discussion in the Conference on Disarmament. The third question asked is about the legitimacy of a minority and coalition government taking such a vital decision. In terms of seats in Parliament and related statistics, the Vajpayee Government might be a minority government, but in terms of voting patterns in the 1996 and 1998 elections there can be little doubt that the BJP's foreign policy and security policy orientations have the general support of the Indian public, and unlike the preceding Deve Gowda and Gujral Governments, the Vajpayee Government is led by the largest single party in the Lower House (Lok Sabha) of the Indian Parliament. In terms of public opinion, conducting of the tests seems to have the general endorsement of the people of India. The fourth criticism levelled is that the Government did not consult various parties before taking the decision. Such sensitive decisions are not preceded by public debate and political consultations. Mrs. Indira Gandhi did not consult various political parties before the 1974 nuclear test. As far as I recall, such decisions by the five nuclear weapon states in the aftermath of the Second World War were not preceded by consultations and transparency. The requirements of political secrecy and technological confidentiality precluded such consultations. More importantly, India has been engaged in prolonged detailed and multifaceted discussions on the nuclear weapons issues over the last 24 years. At each stage of the evolution of the Indian attitude, there was a general national consensus on what was done. This criticism has more to do with party politics rather than with genuine principles.

An additional question needing an answer is whether India's economic modernisation and development would be affected in an irretrievable manner because of the sanctions that would inevitably be imposed in the aftermath of the nuclear tests. The assessment in informed government circles as well as by strategic and economic experts is that the sanctions would create problems for India in the short term. But India's basic natural and human resources and the inherent strength of the Indian economy would

be able to withstand the pressure of these sanctions provided India fulfilled three requirements: that of remaining politically stable and united, that of engaging in constructive discussions with all the important powers of the world to reassure them about their concerns, and that of continuing with its economic liberalisation and reforms purposefully. One speculation was that Defence Minister George Fernandes's critical remarks about China were in preparation for these nuclear tests. There is no such linkage as far as one has ascertained.

What were Indian reactions to external criticism about its tests? New Zealand and Australia withdrawing their High Commissioners from India was an exercise in blatant hypocrisy, given these countries' continuing to have relations with nuclear weapon states which have conducted nuclear tests nearer to their territories and whose nuclear capacities provide a security umbrella for them. Japan's criticism of India can be understood in the context of its being the only country which has suffered from a nuclear weapon attack. But its being specially critical of India is contradictory to its overall attitude towards nuclear weapon powers which have closer relations with it and are also geographically closer to it. The reaction of the United States and European democracies were as anticipated. One hopes that in the context of India's willingness to adhere to some of the provisions of the CTBT on the basis of reciprocity, their reactions would become moderate and would be tempered by an objective acknowledgment of India's concerns and India's responsible and restrained track record on nuclear matters. The basic rationale and motivation of India's nuclear testing initiative are those of being alert to its security environment, being responsive to its threat perceptions and being conscious that there is no substitute for self-reliance for ensuring the country's territorial integrity and security.

The fact of India having refused a suggestion from the US in 1963 that it produce a nuclear bomb to counter anticipated nuclear weaponisation of China has been mentioned in earlier portions of the book. An additional point of importance needs to be mentioned viz., that in 1967, three years after China's nuclear weaponisation

and two years after the Indo-Pak war of 1965, India approached all the nuclear weapon powers except China to enquire whether they would provide security guarantees to India against a nuclear threat. The response of the nuclear weapon powers was ambiguous bordering on the negative which confirmed the conviction mentioned above that there is no substitute for self-reliance in safeguarding national security.

On the whole, India's acquiring the nuclear bomb is justified: first on the ground of its national security requirements in the present regional context. Second, as a continuing basis for technological self-reliance for defence purposes. Third to structure a strategic balance in its neighbourhood given the weapons capacities and deployments of superpowers in the region. Fourth, to avoid being subjected to restrictive and punitive international regimes, by being categorised as a non-nuclear weapons state. (Whatever the legal squabbles, *de facto*, India's nuclear weapons status cannot be questioned.) Fifth, the Indian objective is to change the discriminatory terms of reference governing negotiations on non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, which are sought to be perpetrated by the existing nuclear weapons states. This is precisely why India may not be inclined to sign the CTBT in its present form, much less the NPT. Sixth, and the most important of all, India's nuclear weaponisation is motivated more by political and strategic purposes than operational military intentions. India will only opt for the latter under compelling and unavoidable circumstances.

Taking note of the fact that India's self-restraint did not evoke a rational response from the international community, particularly the superpowers, India perforce has had to accept the wisdom of the dictum given by George Herbert in his book *Jacula Prudentum* way back in 1651 that: "Having one sword keeps the swords of others in their sheaths."

When a nation takes a critically momentous decision moving away from the groove in which it was, it inevitably has to cope with the repercussions and ramifications of that decision. This involves fulfilling the rationale of the decision taken, but even more

important is the requirement of the decision being backed by informed public opinion, specially so in a democracy like ours.

The nuclear tests carried out by India on 11 and 13 May 1998 perhaps reflected the most momentous decision after the initial policy decisions taken by its leaders at the time of independence. Sections of our public opinion are fairly well informed about our nuclear policies. These sections are also quite articulate. It is certain aspects of public reactions which are a matter of concern in coping with the politico-economic and technological fallout of Pokhran II. Reactions have varied from unnecessary and avoidable boastfulness on our TV shows, post-Pokhran, by some strategic analysts claiming that the tests indicated that India had outdistanced China in several nuclear capacities (a patently irrational claim), to intense advocates of nuclear non-proliferation describing the nuclear tests as a "cheap and partisan political trick". There are elements in political circles and in the media who have genuine doubts as to whether undertaking these tests was necessary. While respecting the diversity of opinions is imperative in a democracy, the point to note is that between 87 and 89 per cent of Indian citizens have endorsed the decision of conducting these tests (according to public opinion polls). There is a general feeling of self-confidence and national pride generated by the tests. It is in this context that India should fashion its policies in dealing with the problems and pressures generated by these nuclear tests. It is also in this context that the international community should react to the Indian decision. The challenges that we are likely to face are as follows: first, political isolation; second, a series of economic sanctions; third, imposition of sanctions denying India access to technologies that we may need; fourth, pressure on India to give up its previous reservations and unconditionally adhere to the comprehensive test ban treaty, and the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty; fifth, we will have to deal with other neighbours whose apprehensions about India's politico-strategic intentions would have to be assuaged; sixth, our relations with two of our most important neighbours, China and Pakistan, have gone off into a critical and

negative spin which we have to bring back on track; seventh, we have to structure and nuance our policies in relation to the existing nuclear weapon powers; eighth, we will have to formulate new orientations and elements in our disarmament and arms control policies while these matters are discussed at the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament in the context of our nuclear tests and the policy statements that we have made about their rationale and their objectives.

It stands to reason that before taking the decision to conduct the tests, the Government of India had made a careful assessment of all the negative consequences that India would have to face. Some concrete steps to make the world understand our compulsions have already been taken. Prime Minister Vajpayee has addressed communications to various heads of state and government and to the Secretary-General of the UN. Our diplomatic missions have been asked to brief foreign governments in detail. Our Foreign Secretary has briefed ambassadors in New Delhi in a parallel exercise. Prime Minister Vajpayee, Jaswant Singh (the PM's special envoy) and Pramod Mahajan (the PM's political adviser) have held press briefings following the comprehensive briefings given by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Brajesh Mishra.

An initial explanatory damage control exercise has been underway since early June. What is needed is a multidimensional effort to deal with the pressures mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. India need not be in a hurry to sign the comprehensive test ban treaty. India should further immediately offer to enter into technical discussions with all the nuclear weapons states with the objective of assuring them that it shall abide by discipline and be restrained as far as India's genuine concerns and India's declared strategic status are recognised. We can also consider taking the position that we shall abide by the stipulations of the CTBT to the maximum extent possible, without being a party to it (as far as it remains a discriminatory agreement), exactly as the Chinese have declared that though not being a signatory to the missile technology control regime, they adhere to its provisions. We should give a

unilateral commitment of "no first use" of our nuclear weapons capacities to the international community and to our neighbours, particularly to Pakistan. We should indicate our willingness to participate in the negotiations for the FMCT provided it does not suffer from the faults of the current CTBT. These are the issues which can form the subjects of technical negotiations. We must assure the United States, Pakistan, Russia, China, the UK and France that our nuclear weapon status will not pose an aggressive strategic threat to any country. This should be done at the highest political level. A high-level special envoy of the Prime Minister with political stature should be deputed to the capitals of these countries to convey this message. Similar initiatives should be taken at the Conference on Disarmament and with regard to the President of the UN General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the UN. The current Chairman of the Non-aligned Movement should also be approached in the matter with the request that he convey our assurance to other members of the movement. Apart from the five nuclear weapons powers and our neighbours, we must undertake a similar initiative with the ASEAN and explain our predicament and our policies at the next meeting of the ARF.

Initial indications are that the world at large is not likely to declare an economic and technological war on India collectively. There would be selective imposition of sanctions, the magnitude of which would be determined by individual countries. Our response should not be confrontationist. It should be patient, sober and rational. There should be no element of jingoism in our political and diplomatic postures. We will have to undertake a concerted and stable campaign aimed at the multilateral financial institutions to head off any excessively negative decisions being taken by them against India. Initial assessments are that we can survive the sanctions if there is political unity and stability and if we carry on with our economic restructuring and reforms in a purposeful and dynamic manner, not allowing partisan politics to affect the process. We would also have to bear the brunt of restrictions on transfers of technology to us. Our own technological and infrastructural capacities and trained

manpower resources should enable us to survive this particular pressure to some extent. If over a period of the coming year or two, the world gets convinced about our rationale and responsible behaviour, sanctions may diminish. We must utilise the influential non-resident Indian communities in advanced industrial countries to remove suspicions and doubts about us and to generate positive points of view in the establishments of these countries regarding India.

Simultaneously, New Delhi must also utilise the linkages which it now has with multinational companies which have already been active in India in the post-Cold War period to further the country's interests. There is also a need to undertake an exercise in educating the Indian public at large (1) about the reasons for our nuclear weaponisation, (2) about the pressures which India is likely to face and (3) about the manner in which we should take remedial measures to meet these pressures. Above all, we must not be self-doubting or defensive about the decision that we have taken (i.e., to go nuclear). We must consciously nurture the political will and stamina to meet the difficult times which we will face in the foreseeable future.

A broad question being raised is: what has India achieved by taking this radical and internationally unpopular decision of becoming a nuclear weapons state? The achievements could be summed up as follows: The first point to be made is that it is the capacity or capability of a country and its people to go down a lonely path alone in its own interests which is the ultimate test of its will to survive and to safeguard its independence and territorial integrity. The tests perhaps affirm this capacity or capability. Secondly, the people of India, leaving aside the experts and the pillars of power structure, were quite uncertain about our scientific and technological capacities. They were getting a little bemused about the theory of nuclear options being kept open. The tests confirmed to the people India's capacities and potentialities in a definite manner. Thirdly, the tests have infused a sense of confidence and decisiveness in India's foreign and defence policies. A positive psychological and emotional repercussion has been felt in India though the phenomenon cannot

be quantified. Fourth, we have sent clear and unambiguous messages to the international community that we are a nuclear weapons power and that we have indigenously developed our capabilities to a satisfactory level. This is a ground reality which the world would have to come to terms with, whatever be the legal quibbling about our status as a nuclear weapons state because we did not acquire this capacity before 1 January 1968. Fifth, the achievement has sent out a signal to the world as well as to our own public that our restraint and discipline, despite provocations and restrictions lasting for 24 years, were not a result of inabilities or lack of technological capacities. Our restraint was voluntary and was based on a knowledge about our own strength and our potentialities. Sixth, we have laid the foundation for a credible response to the strategic and security environment around us. Seventh, we have profoundly changed the strategic balance between nuclear weapons powers in the political sense. We have also changed the strategic equations in Asian power relations. Eighth, the technological spin-off of this confirmed capacity of ours would serve peaceful purposes and contribute to our economic development. And lastly, in any new global arrangement, India would be a force to be reckoned with. India cannot be ignored in international calculations for global security in the future.

In many ways, India's nuclear tests and nuclear weapons status balance off the critical impact that our hesitations and reticences made on our foreign and defence policies during the last 50 years. It is appropriate that we have redressed the balance in the international order in favour of developing countries and in India's interests by the momentous decision that we implemented at Pokhran on 11 and 13 May 1998. Pokhran II will stand out as an appropriate watershed from which we can evaluate the past and plan the future after more than 50 years of independence.

Having made the foregoing assessment and having reached certain conclusions, it is equally important to turn our attention to the overt nuclear weaponisation of Pakistan between 28 and 30 May 1998. Neither the speed with which Pakistan redressed the balance of India's formal acquisition of nuclear weapons status

nor the accompanying political and technological rhetoric about Pakistan's superior missile and nuclear weapons capabilities from prominent people like Gohar Ayub Khan (Pakistan's Foreign Minister) and the presiding scientist Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan came as a surprise to India. This prospect was taken into account when the Vajpayee Government took the radical decision to conduct nuclear tests. The debates about whether Pakistan really conducted seven nuclear tests or whether only three or four of them were successful or whether Pakistan's other claims are valid or not are not relevant. The basic fact to be acknowledged is that Pakistan claims to have achieved macro-level strategic military and political parity with India by its nuclear and missile tests.

It is the impact of these developments on India's foreign policy and future prospects that should be pertinent issues for analysis and examination. Some additional background information on the process by which Pakistan has emerged as a nuclear weapons state would be relevant.

It is a well-known and verified fact that Pakistan entertained nuclear ambitions from the mid-1960s onwards. As mentioned earlier, Pakistan decided to nuclearly weaponise itself by January 1972, within three weeks of its massive military defeat by Indian forces during the 1971 war. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto who succeeded Yahya Khan was clear in his mind that acquisition of nuclear weapons and the related delivery systems by Pakistan was imperative if it was to match India's superior conventional technology and military capacities. This was the force multiplier which Pakistan sought, and which it has achieved. Bhutto had called a meeting of eminent Pakistani scientists in Multan in January 1972 and announced his desire and decision to make Pakistan a nuclear weapons state and he urged his scientists to help him achieve this aim, if possible, within three years, i.e., by 1975. There is a wealth of published information available about the evolution of Pakistan as a nuclear weapons power through clandestine means. Pakistan was helped in the process in terms of material, technology, maps and designs and sophisticated equipment by France, the UK, the US, Holland, Germany, Italy and the Scandanavian countries indirectly and, above

all, China. China has also been actively assisting Pakistan in developing its military missile capacities. Aircraft of US and French manufacture of the Pakistani air force were given suitable weapons configuration structures to carry and deliver nuclear warheads. Records assiduously maintained and collated by the Centre for Non-Proliferation Studies in the Monterey Institute of International Studies, California, indicate that Pakistan went into high gear to become a nuclear weapons state from 1977 onwards after having collected the basic material necessary to launch its plans through illegal means between 1972 and 1975. Pakistan has single-mindedly followed a nuclear weaponisation process for 20 years, which culminated in its tests of 28 and 30 May 1998.

Between 1972 and 1974, Pakistan had persuaded Libya, Saudi Arabia, and, to some extent, Iraq, to fund its nuclear weapons programme. This funding has continued. By 1986, Pakistan had acquired the capacity to manufacture raw material for nuclear weapons and to assemble them.

Ultimately, it was China that emerged as the main supplier of Pakistan's nuclear weaponisation programme. It has been discerned from the technological documents and reports, covering the 1980s and 1990s, that China had assisted Pakistan in developing nuclear technological capacities. China had sold special industrial furnaces and high-technology diagnostic equipment to unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in Pakistan. (China's Nuclear Energy Industrial Corporation was the source of this equipment.) China also supplied Pakistan with ring magnets, drawings and designs for the manufacture of nuclear bombs. High-temperature furnaces supplied by China have facilitated Pakistan's manufacture of tritium moulds for the nose cones of the missiles which will carry nuclear warheads.

The United States has been the source of zirconium and kryton electric triggers for the nuclear bombs and other such material. Germany and some Scandinavian countries have been the source for electronic components, tritium purification and production facilities and so on. There is confirmed information that China supplied Pakistan both highly enriched uranium and complete drawings and designs for a 25 kiloton nuclear bomb in 1983.

A Pakistani nuclear device was reportedly tested at the Chinese testing site at Lop Nor in Sinkiang in 1987. By 1992, both Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan and senior officers such as Pakistan Foreign Secretary Shahryar Khan had confirmed that Pakistan was a nuclear weapons capable state. By 1995-96, Pakistani political leaders had started threatening India with a nuclear response, if India took decisive military action against Pakistani intrusion into Jammu and Kashmir. Certain aspects are quite clear. First, the primary motivation of Pakistan was to harness nuclear energy only for military and weaponisation purposes. Secondly, the programme was generally under the control of the Pakistani military establishment. Thirdly, Pakistan's nuclear weaponisation programme was mostly a clandestine operation, which was connived at by the US during the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and in which varied outputs came from China and a number of Western democracies. Pakistan's nuclear weaponisation programme commenced nearly two years before India began its nuclear weaponisation experiment in 1974.

Apart from qualitatively transforming the strategic and military balance in its favour, the other implications of Pakistani nuclear weaponisation are the following:

(1) It will use its nuclear weapons capacity as a leverage to reactivate the Kashmir issue and make the US and other important countries pressurise India to compromise on Kashmir, even suggesting mediation by them.
(2) Pakistan will also induce such pressure on India to sign the discriminatory non-proliferation agreements.
(3) Pakistan can become a source for the spread of nuclear weapons to other Islamic countries.
(4) If the sanctions imposed on it become unbearable, Pakistan might even consider exporting nuclear weapons technology for economic returns from other interested countries.

The strategic and security cooperation between Pakistan and China can have a negative impact on the regional security environment from India's point of view.

Pakistan will nurture the sympathy and support of the existing nuclear weapons powers by giving them assurances that it will unconditionally adhere to all discriminatory non-proliferation regimes, if India were to do the same, which India evidently cannot. Pakistan's declared nuclear weapons status poses new and complex challenges to India's foreign policy, strategic planning and India's equations with other centres of power in the international community.

In some respects, India should be relieved that Pakistan has gone ahead and tested its nuclear devices and declared itself a nuclear weapons state. Such a move has ensured greater transparency about Pakistan's capacities and intentions. It also removes the complexes, suspicions and uncertainties about each other's nuclear capacities. A certain parity in nuclear weapons and missile capacities will put in place structured mutual deterrents, which could persuade the Governments of India and Pakistan to discuss bilateral disputes in a more rational and practical manner.

While being alert about threats inherent in Pakistan's nuclear weapons capacities, India should engage in a purposive and continuous dialogue with Pakistan in order to forge a stable security environment in South Asia. We should attempt to put in place credible mutual and equal securities guarantees. I think India and Pakistan should seriously discuss and finalise agreements on the "no first use" of nuclear capacities, keeping in view the suggestion made by India and the non-aggression pact suggested by the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Kashmir is perceived as a flashpoint with potentialities of a nuclear conflict. Both countries must not hesitate to discuss the Kashmir issue in substance from their respective points of view and undertake an innovative and objective exercise to find a mutually acceptable solution, taking into account the ground realities and the changed strategic and security environment.

Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests provide, on the one hand, an opportunity for both countries to fashion new and constructive terms of reference to stabilise their relations and move towards

mutual cooperation. On the other hand, if the acquisition of this additional dangerous power results in thoughtless aggressiveness or irrational jingoism, the prospects are of unmitigated disaster and enormous tragedy for the people of the subcontinent. It is an irony of history and the political process that India and Pakistan, both commemorating the 50th anniversary of their independence, confront this profound and critical challenge of choosing between the above two options towards the end of the golden jubilee year of their existence and at the threshold of the twenty-first century. Future generations of Indians and Pakistanis will judge the current generations and their leaderships on the basis of the option they choose. The choice is between rationality and mutually assured destruction. One hopes that reason will prevail.

18

Kargil, Agra and Beyond

The book *Across Borders: Fifty Years of India's Foreign Policy* presented a panoramic survey of India's foreign policy to mark the fiftieth anniversary of India's independence. As the manuscript was being prepared, India conducted its nuclear weapons tests (Shakti II series) in May 1998. A couple of chapters had to be added to the book as an assessment of the implications of this momentous development. One presumed that the nuclear weaponisation of India and Pakistan would be a watershed or a defining moment in India's foreign relations for some time to come. This presumption has proved to be wrong, proving once again the didactic wisdom of historians, Well and Ariel Durant, that history is never linear or logical. It is baroque, unpredictable and volatile, reflecting the vagaries and uncertain impulses governing human behaviour.

Much has changed in the world over the last five and a half years, leading to transformations as well as shifting of emphasis and orientations in India's foreign policy. International power equations have undergone dramatic changes. The predication that the end of the Cold War would lead to the establishment of an international order based on participatory equilibrium between important centres of power in the world has not been achieved. A number of significant events, both India-specific and generally affecting international politics, have occurred. New trends in international security arrangements have evolved. The role of the United Nations in managing the responsibilities of conflict

resolution and maintenance of peace and stability is subject to arbitrarily imposed critical and debilitating pressures. It is relevant, therefore, to mention details of these critical transformations and related events. It is also pertinent to examine how India's foreign policy has coped with these changes and resultant pressures.

In terms of India-specific concerns, Indo-Pakistan relations have become tense and have degenerated into an atmosphere of continuing confrontation. India had to fight another war with Pakistan due to the latter's invasion of portions of Jammu and Kashmir in the Kargil sector in the summer of 1999. This war was followed by the hijacking of an Indian plane by Pakistan-based terrorists from Kathmandu to Kandahar (in Afghanistan) in December 1999. The hijackers demanded the release of Pakistani terrorists held in Indian jails. This demand was met by the Government of India. Both these events were preceded by major initiatives by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to improve relations with Pakistan. He visited Lahore in February 1999 by the land route, by bus, across the Wagah border, to be welcomed there by his counterpart Nawaz Sharif. The Kargil war proved again the contradictions between Pakistani pretensions about desiring normalcy in India and its real intentions of truncating and fragmenting the territorial unity and integrity of India.

Despite the angst and anger about the intrusion into Kargil, another attempt was made in July 2000 with Prime Minister Vajpayee inviting Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf for a summit meeting to Agra. This summit also proved to be an abortive exercise. The period between 2001 and 2003 has witnessed not just a continuance but an increase in Pakistan-sponsored terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir and in other parts of India. The most traumatic events in this process were the attacks on Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly in October 2001 and on the Indian Parliament itself in New Delhi on 13 December 2001.

On the diplomatic front, managing Indo-Pakistan relations, balancing the requirements of Indian security, with a need to avoid nuclear confrontation with Pakistan, posed a major challenge to India's foreign policy. In the broader stage of international relations, the attack on the World Trade Center in New York and

the Pentagon in Washington by Islamic terrorists on 11 September 2001 made a profound impact on interstate relations as well as on the foreign and security policy orientations of the US. Most vitally, the doctrine of pre-emptive coercive action to prevent negative phenomena affecting the stability and integrity of states and safety of civil societies along with upholding of human rights, democracy and imperative good governance became an operational element in the foreign policy of the US and its allies. Decisions were taken and implemented to deal with so-called rogue states, regimes supporting international terrorism and governments considered irresponsible and in possession of weapons of mass destruction. The United States, while still insisting on preventing horizontal proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, pulled back from the arrangements of arms control that it had agreed to previously. Consequently, the US decided to resume putting in place high technology and sophisticated national defence arrangements.

The international economic order expected to be forged under the aegis of the World Trade Organisation has been stalled due to Washington stipulating additional conditionalities and other countries being dissatisfied with the WTO regime.

Politically, militarily and technologically, the world has to learn to cope with the unipolar supremacy of the United States of America. The change of regime in Afghanistan in 2001-02 and the removal of Saddam Hussain from Iraq — as a result of an attack by the US and the UK in March-April 2003 — have created new precedents for structuring the world order. A certain stability, though complex, which characterised interstate relations during the Cold War and during the initial two or three years after the end of the Cold War with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, stands disrupted. The world is in ferment in many ways. A description and assessment of how India's foreign policy has dealt with these transformations are necessary.

One ought to begin with the most proximate foreign policy concerns of India, namely, relations with Pakistan over the last five years.

The India-Pakistan war in the Kargil sector along the Line of Control (LOC) in Jammu and Kashmir lasted from 6 May to

roughly the end of July 1999. It was the fifth large-scale conflict between the two countries. There seems to have been a subconscious reluctance on the part of both India and Pakistan to acknowledge the extensive nature of these conflicts, their territorial motivations and the violence inherent in them. Euphemisms are invariably used. The military confrontations are described as "skirmishes", "intrusions", "war-like situations" or "limited military operations", whereas, in fact, Indian and Pakistani armed forces were engaged in full-scale military operations against each other in 1947-48, twice in 1965 in Kutch, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir (a war that spread across the international frontiers between India and Pakistan), in 1971 during the East Pakistan crisis, and most recently, in Kargil.

A significant and recurrent characteristic of these military confrontations has been that each time Pakistan has initiated the confrontation covertly, whether it was in Kashmir, in Kutch or in former East Pakistan. When the resistance to its moves was threatened with failure, Pakistan deployed regular troops, which, in turn, invited full-scale military responses from India. Out of the four conflicts, it is only during the 1965 and 1971 conflicts that New Delhi formally declared that a state of war existed between India and Pakistan. Otherwise, there has been reluctance to accept the fact that all the major conflicts between India and Pakistan were, in fact, regular wars, in which the armed forces of the two countries engaged in military operations against each other. The military conflict between India and Pakistan in Kargil in 1999 was certainly not a skirmish, a border incident or a marginal intrusion; it was a war: a war launched by Pakistan with definite and clear strategic, territorial and political motives, with premeditated planning and detailed preparation.

A political and emotional background can be discerned in the Pakistan military initiative in Kargil, which has not been taken note of by public opinion on both sides of the border. Pakistan's Kargil venture was, in some ways, a culmination of various options exercised to acquire Jammu and Kashmir. It was also rooted in Pakistani calculations based on the experience of the failure of other efforts in Kashmir, particularly during the period from 1989

to 1999. The first argument that Pakistan put forward to realise its territorial claim was that Jammu and Kashmir becoming part of Pakistan was an unfinished agenda of partition (since partition was based on the two-nation theory) and since Jammu and Kashmir was a Muslim-majority state (and contiguous with West Pakistan), it should be part of Pakistan. The second argument was that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have a right to self-determination. They were promised a plebiscite way back in 1947-48 by a UN resolution in order to exercise this right, from which India was reneging. Then there was the argument that the Government of India was violating human rights in Jammu and Kashmir. It was, therefore, the obligation of Pakistan, as an Islamic country, and the obligation of the international community as well to liberate Jammu and Kashmir from the Indian yoke.

All these arguments failed to arouse the people of Jammu and Kashmir into a mass movement against India. Also, the international community failed to be convinced by the Pakistani viewpoints. Islamabad, consequently, resorted to the final adventuristic reasoning that since both India and Pakistan have *declared* nuclear weapons capacities since 1998, if India was not asked by the international community to give up Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan, the world must face the prospect of nuclear war between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. The fallout of such a war would prove dangerous not only for the Asian region, but also for global stability and security.

The last argument did jog the international community awake from its dormant state. The consequence was pressure exerted on both India and Pakistan from 1990 onwards to keep the bilateral dialogue going and to agree upon, and implement, as many confidence-building measures as possible to avoid the prospect of a military confrontation. As a result of this pressure as well as the Indian desire to avoid a military confrontation, a number of discussions were held (between 1989 and 1994) between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan and between the senior officials of both Governments, including military officials. These exercises led to limited success, which found expression in the confidence-building measures agreed to between 1990 and 1993. These

measures included the establishment of direct telephone hotlines between Prime Ministers, Foreign Secretaries and the Directors-General of military operations. Agreement was reached on both sides to avoid holding military exercises at close proximity to the international frontier and to give advance notice about land, air and naval exercises to each other. There was even an agreement on treatment of diplomatic representatives. The implementation of these measures, however, clearly indicated that Pakistan conceived them to be a limited tactical public relations exercise. Simultaneously, active Pakistani support to subversive elements in Jammu and Kashmir and in other parts of India has not only continued but has also increased. The commitment to make Jammu and Kashmir a part of Pakistan remained and remains an unalterable objective of the Pakistani power structure.

It is in this context that Pakistan launched "Operation Badr" — the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir through the Kargil sector. It would be pertinent to mention the broad Pakistani political assessments and calculations on the basis of which Pakistan launched this campaign. The Pakistani assessment was that the credibility of J&K Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah was low. Pakistan believed that the Indian army and security forces were involved in so many disparate activities (such as maintaining law and order in communally sensitive areas and tackling insurgency) that they would not be able to resist a coordinated large-scale military onslaught in an unexpected manner, in an unexpected area. The Vajpayee Government had lost a motion of no-confidence in the Lok Sabha in March 1999. Apart from being a coalition, the Government of India was merely a "caretaker" one, which would be busy in preparing for general elections in the country. The anticipation was that the Vajpayee Government would not have sufficient credibility to take firm decisions against foreign aggression due to the volatile and uncertain political situation within India. Most importantly, the Pakistani assessment was that the Indian army would not be able to resist and push back Pakistani forces once the latter entrenched themselves at strategic heights on the Himalayan ranges in the vital Kargil sector. This assessment was based on repeated reports in the Indian media about our army

being short of officers and equipment and its morale being low throughout the 1990s. Islamabad was also confident that if Indian military resistance became unmanageable, Pakistan could resort to using nuclear weapons, which would bring in international intervention and, at the same time, temper Indian inclinations to extend the war and threaten Pakistan's general security as had happened in 1965 and 1971.

There was also a feeling in the Pakistani military high command that the Indian army must be suffering from low morale because of its long-term deployment in counterinsurgency activities in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India. In fact, the Report of the Kargil Review Committee chaired by K. Subrahmanyam quotes Lieutenant-General Javed Nasir, former head of the Pakistani ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence), as providing an assessment early in 1999: "The Indian army is incapable of undertaking any conventional operations at present, so how can one talk of their enlarging a conventional conflict!"

Before proceeding to more specific political and strategic objectives of the Pakistani aggression in Kargil and before detailing the chronology of events, it would be necessary to take note of the professional background and attitude of the key military figures who launched this aggression. General Pervez Musharraf, Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan since 1998, who later, in an October 1999 coup, overthrew the democratically elected Nawaz Sharif Government and nominated himself as the Chief Executive of Pakistan. First, we must try to understand the policies that he was inclined to follow in relation to India. Musharraf's public pronouncements provide some clear indications. As far as India was concerned, he was known to maintain the posture of political and military confrontation. He firmly believed that a sustained campaign of subversion and military intrusion would result in Pakistan achieving its objective of annexing Kashmir. His background and persona were factors that influenced his initiating the Kargil misadventure.

General Musharraf belongs to an Uttar Pradesh Muslim family. His grandparents and parents were residents of Delhi in the period immediately before partition. Born in 1943, his family migrated

to Pakistan when he was four. He grew up in Karachi and then in Gujranwala, ultimately being commissioned in the artillery branch of the Pakistan army in 1964. He had a comparatively routine career till President Zia-ul-Haq took notice of him because of his reputation as a devout Muslim officer and his links with a number of Islam-*pasand* politicians of Pakistan. Like Zia, General Musharraf has strong links with the Jamaat-e-Islami of Pakistan. The first significant assignment given by Zia to Musharraf was to be in charge of training mercenaries recruited from various Muslim countries for fighting against Soviet troops in Afghanistan, in the concerned directorate of the ISI. There are reports that during this period he had contacts with Osama bin Laden, who was originally brought to Afghanistan by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) itself, for constructing bunkers and tunnels for Afghan Mujahideen in different theatres of conflict in Afghanistan. As part of his responsibility of training mercenaries, General Musharraf was also involved in financing their operations with the assistance of narcotic smugglers operating in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan. An interesting sidelight to this phase of his career is that while intelligence establishments of the USA and the Pakistan valued his services, the Narcotics Control Establishment of the US Government was not enamoured of the general. This is given as one of the reasons why General Musharraf is somewhat of an oddity in the Pakistani officers' cadre in that he has never gone for any higher military training to US military institutions. He has undergone training only in the United Kingdom.

The year 1987 was a watershed in General Musharraf's career. He was made the brigade commander of the newly raised Special Services Group in the Siachen glacier area of the Himalayas, created to push back Indian forces from there. He was responsible for a major attack on the Indian military post at Bilafond La, in the Siachen sector, in September 1987. His forces were decisively defeated by Indian troops. He was then given a special assignment in the summer of 1989 to suppress a revolt by the Shias in the Gilgit region (in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) against the Sunni-dominated local administration. Musharraf supplemented his troops with Pathan tribesmen from the NWFP and Afghanistan

for this operation, in which hundreds of Shias were massacred and displaced. Pakistani newspapers and magazines such as the *Dawn* and the *Herald* reported that Musharraf's troops invaded Gilgit district along the Karakoram highway, destroyed crops and houses and killed a large number of the rural population. He followed up this action with changing the demography of the region by bringing in Punjabis and Pathans and setting them up in Gilgit and Baltistan, essentially in order to reduce the majority of Kashmiri Shias, who were the original inhabitants of the area. Musharraf has spent several years with the Special Services Group in two separate assignments and claims to be the most knowledgeable expert on mountain warfare in the Pakistan armed forces. He values his identity as a commando more than as a gunner. The culmination of his field assignments was reached when he was appointed the force commander, Northern Areas, which made him in charge of all military and subversive operations against Jammu and Kashmir. The assignment also brought him in close touch with senior officials of the ISI and extremist Islamic groups dealing with operations in Afghanistan and subversion in Jammu and Kashmir.

It was from the late 1980s and the mid-1990s that Musharraf established close links with groups such as the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Toiba and Tabligi Jamaat. There are reports that Musharraf has links also with Osama bin Laden's international Islamic Front for jehad against the US and Israel. Interestingly, Musharraf was also reported to be directly involved with an unsuccessful military coup against Benazir Bhutto in the autumn of 1995. The attempt was allegedly led by Major General Zaheer-ul-Islam Abbasi, who succeeded Musharraf as force commander, Northern Areas. The Pakistan media has reported that had the coup succeeded, General Musharraf would have been the candidate for head of state. Both Abbasi and General Aziz (who was General Musharraf's chief of staff in 1999) were reported to be part of this coup. Throughout the 1990s, Musharraf and his senior associates were involved in the supply of finance and arms to various secessionist groups and mercenaries including those intruding into Jammu and Kashmir.

Coming to the more recent developments, Pervez Musharraf was not enthusiastic about the Lahore meeting between Nawaz Sharif and Vajpayee in early 1999. Even while the meeting was taking place, Musharraf had finalised plans for attacking India along the Line of Control (LOC) in Jammu and Kashmir in the Kargil sector. He was the principal architect of the fourth major military conflict between India and Pakistan. Musharraf felt that he would succeed in his Kargil adventure because, in his assessment, conditions in India were politically uncertain and the morale of the Indian armed forces was low owing to the poor leadership of Defence Minister George Fernandes and the soft leadership of Vajpayee. In fact, a former chief of the ISI, General Assad Durrani, went to the extent of assessing during the initial stages of the Kargil conflict that Fernandes was perhaps the "best" Indian defence minister that Pakistan could hope for.

According to a study done by the Indian Institute for Topical Studies, Pervez Musharraf's approach towards India and the Kashmir question could be summarised as follows (the assessment is based on the pronouncements and interviews of Musharraf since October 1998):

(1) The BJP is a party of "paper tigers" known more for verbosity than for action.
(2) Pakistan's nuclear and missile capability has ensured that India would not retaliate against Pakistan for occupying the ridges in the Kargil area.
(3) The fear of the possible use of nuclear weapons would bring in Western intervention, thereby internationalising the Kashmir issue.
(4) Pakistan should agree to a ceasefire only if it were allowed to remain in occupation of the Indian territory. There should be no question of the restoration of the status quo ante.
(5) The acquisition of Kashmir by Pakistan can wait. What was more important was to keep the Indian army bleeding in Kashmir just as the Afghan Mujahideen kept the Soviet troops bleeding in Afghanistan.
(6) Even if the Kashmir issue were resolved, there could not be normal relations between India and Pakistan because Pakistan,

by frustrating India's ambition of emerging as a major Asian power on par with China and Japan, would continue to be the thorn in India's flesh. And so long as it did so, Pakistan would continue to enjoy the backing of China and Japan.

Such is Musharraf's professional background and it demonstrates the mindset of an assertive, theologically committed military figure. India's then High Commissioner in Pakistan, Satish Chandra (later Secretary of the National Security Council and Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee), commenting on General Musharraf"s personality when he took over as Chief of the Army Staff of Pakistan in Ocotber 1998, indicated that the general was hawkish, ambitious and had longstanding links with several Islamic fundamentalist groups.

The question of why Pakistan decided to resort to massive territorial aggression against India in the Kargil sector merits geographical, operational and psychological answers. As mentioned earlier, Pakistan had not succeeded in making any dent on the Indian political and territorial position in Jammu and Kashmir, despite the various political arguments and manoeuvrings it had put forward and indulged in since 1989. Pakistanis, therefore, felt something very drastic had to be done on the ground to disrupt the whole political and military hold of India in Jammu and Kashmir. All Pakistani military operations against India in Jammu and Kashmir had been launched on a south-west, north-east axis, through Jammu, from areas on the south-western flank of Jammu and Kashmir. Such attacks had been successfully resisted by the Indian armed forces more than once during the past 50 years. So Pakistanis felt that the attempt to strategically dominate the Kashmir Valley should be launched from a different location, west of the Indian-held areas up to the Line of Control (LOC). This approach was entertained by the Pakistani military command from the late 1970s onwards. The first attempt to get a foothold *vis-à-vis* the Kashmir Valley was undertaken in the early 1980s in the Siachen glacier area because Pakistan felt that the demarcation of the LOC there could be ambiguously interpreted to justify their intrusion. It is relevant to recall that the LOC in Jammu and

Kashmir has clearly been demarcated up to a grid reference point on the map, NJ 9842. It was agreed that it shall lie northwards from this grid reference towards the glacier. Pakistan desired to take advantage of these cartographic formulations. Indian intelligence came to know about the Pakistani plans and Indian troops, in pre-emptive operations, moved forward and established posts at various points in the Siachen glacier region in 1984. Pakistani attempts to dislodge Indian troops from their positions in Siachen have repeatedly failed. Pakistan believed that large-scale mobilisation across the LOC would draw away Indian troops from the valley for border defence purposes, a situation which could then be utilised to heighten levels of terrorism within Jammu and Kashmir. The immediate assessment on the basis of which Pakistan launched the Kargil operations have been summed up in the Subrahmanyam Report:

(1) Pakistan's nuclear capability would forestall any major Indian move particularly across the international border. It was Pakistan's assessment that the nuclear deterrent has worked in its favour from the mid-1980s. (Not an invalid assessment objectively speaking.)
(2) The international community would prevent the expansion of a conflict by intervening through bilateral mechanisms or through the UN. If Pakistan consolidated its gains across the LOC, the international community would accept the new situation, bettering Pakistan's negotiating position.
(3) China would be supportive of Pakistan's military operations.
(4) A weak and unstable government in India would be incapable of a firm response and would not expand the conflict into Pakistan across the international border.
(5) The Indian army itself may not be able to respond effectively because of its counterinsurgency commitments in Jammu and Kashmir.
(6) Due to an inadequacy of resources east of the Zoji La pass, India would not be able to react effectively against intrusions before this pass opens for traffic by the end of May or early June.

(7) The Indian army did not have troops sufficiently trained in high-altitude warfare and would not be able to deploy adequate forces to counter a pre-emptive surprise Pakistani move. The Pakistani military intrusion, if successful, would disrupt the return of normalcy in the valley.

The incursion across the LOC in the Kargil sector had been part of Pakistan's strategic options and war games since the mid-1980s. Senior journalist and adviser to Field Marshal Ayub Khan, Altaf Gohar, has confirmed that a plan to intrude in the Kargil sector by means of a major operation existed in the Pakistan Army Headquarters since 1987 onwards. But it was not operationalised by the successive governments of Pakistan till 1999. General Zia, during the last year and half of his tenure, then Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, pulled back from the Kargil plan primarily because the Chiefs of Army Staff, General Mirza Aslam Beg and General Jehangir Karamat, were not in favour of such a large-scale military operation to which an Indian response could have been unpredictable. General Pervez Musharraf, however, had a different mindset. He was deeply involved in various military operations in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and the Northern Areas. He was frustrated about the debacle at Siachen for nearly a decade and a half. It was a region in which he had been militarily active. The comparatively uncertain political situation in India and the assessment of the state of preparedness and morale of the Indian forces made him feel that he could safely launch the Kargil operation in the preparation of which he had remained involved off and on from 1993 onwards as Director-General, military operations. Pervez Musharraf visited the Northern Areas of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on 20 and 21 October 1998 accompanied by Lieutenant-General Mehmood Ahmed, General Officer Commanding of the 10th Corps of the Pakistani army. The plan to launch an attack on Kargil was finalised during this visit and was given final shape in October and December 1998.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was briefed about the Kargil plan at the General Headquarters of the Pakistan army in Rawalpindi in January 1999, a month before he met Prime Minister

Vajpayee at Lahore on 22 February 1999. Incursions by Pakistani armed forces commenced from the end of 1998, first for reconnaissance purposes and then to prepare the ground for a large-scale invasion across the LOC.

The process of incursions by regular Pakistani troops occurred during the period December 1998 to March 1999. By the last week of April and first week of May 1999, Pakistani troops had crossed the LOC all along the Kargil region. They were positioned in the Batalik sector, Dras sector, Mushkoh sector, Kaksar sector, and also at Turtok and Chorbat La. The first clear perception that Pakistan was engaged in a large-scale invasion across the LOC occurred between 2 May and 5 May 1999 when forward units of the Indian army obtained information about increased Pakistani presence from their local informants. The war (which commenced in May 1999 and came to an end in late July-early August 1999) was fought along a 200-km front along LOC stretching from Mushkoh Valley to the Saltoro Bridge on the western flank of the Siachen glacier. Pakistan had not only crossed the LOC to a width of nearly 200 km but had also moved into territory to a depth of 10 to 12 km. The main battle was fought in excruciatingly difficult terrain in extremely cold conditions, and at heights of between 3000 and 6000 metres.

The overall confrontationist phenomenon instigated by Pakistan resulted in regular war fighting (without being openly declared) between Pakistani troops of the Northern Areas under their force commander as well as 10 Corps of the Pakistan army and nearly two and half divisions of the Indian army belonging to the Northern Command. While the Pakistani troops used light and heavy infantry weapons as well as heavy artillery and surface-to-air missiles, the Indian armed forces, apart from using similar weapons systems, also operated with support from the Indian air force, involving both helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. The IAF lost two aircraft and a helicopter in the initial phase of the operations but remained part of the collective coordinated military effort despite the losses. The Indian navy went into a pre-emptive effective posture against Pakistan by deploying warships in the Arabian Sea, bottling up the Pakistani navy and Pakistani shipping

at Karachi. Pakistan had labelled its invasion "Operation Badr". The Indian responses of the army, air force and navy were labelled respectively, "Operation Vijay", "Operation Safed Sagar" and "Operation Talwar". Another dimension of the Kargil conflict that the Indian people should collectively acknowledge is that it was a costly war marked by high sacrifices and tragedy. One estimate reveals that 474 officers and other ranks of the Indian army were killed and 1109 soldiers were wounded. The largest number of casualties were among young officers who valiantly led from the front, soldiers who were deeply committed to the country. The Kargil Review Committee Report gave the verdict that despite harsh battle conditions and heavy casualties, the morale of the Indian forces was extremely high.

What was the motivation of Pakistan's military adventurism in Kargil? What was the extent of the direct governmental participation in the aggression in the Kargil sector and along the LOC? What are the lessons that India should learn from the Kargil experience? Should Pakistan be trusted to return to the negotiating table? Should the dialogue be continued? Given the apparent intention of Pakistan to continue its proxy war against India to destabilise the latter, how should New Delhi deal with this threat? How should India assess the international reaction to the Kargil crisis? What are the lines on which Indo-Pakistan relations are likely to develop?

Before one proceeds to examine these points, it would be pertinent to describe the geo-strategic and demographic characteristics of Kargil and the factual and legal basis of the LOC that divides Pakistan-occupied Kashmir from the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India.

Geo-strategically, Kargil is a region of great significance for the security of the Kashmir Valley, Ladakh and other Indian military positions on the Siachen glacier. The area lying south-west of Ladakh straddles the approaches towards Siachen, Ladakh and the Kashmir Valley. The area lies within the Indian territory east of the LOC and Siachen and the Saltoro heights that are beyond the northernmost points up to which the LOC has been formally demarcated and delineated (the grid refers to Point

NJ 9842). It should be remembered that Kargil is not a part of the Kashmir Valley. It was originally part of Ladakh but was made a separate district because the majority of the people living there were Muslims. If Pakistan could capture the Kargil area (stretching across 140 km of mountain ranges) it could interdict the highway from the Kashmir Valley to Ladakh and cut off India's approach to both Ladakh and Siachen. The Kargil sector of the LOC (covering the Mushkoh Valley, Dras, Kaksar Chhainikund, Shingo Batalik and Chorbat La) was not manned in detail and around the year because of the terrain. There were gaps among brigades providing security to the Siachen region, brigades responsible for security of the Siachen region and brigades responsible for security at Kargil and Gurez. It was also felt that the composite Buddhist-Shia population of the area would be a natural preventive against any extensive Pakistan military intrusion. As stated earlier, regular Pakistani forces came across the LOC all along the 200 km stretch penetrating into Indian territory to a depth of 10 to 12 km between March and May 1999. When challenged by India, Pakistan argued that it had not crossed into Indian territory and that the LOC in this sector was not clearly demarcated or delineated.

It would be sufficient to keep the following facts in mind. The LOC is rooted in the ceasefire lines drawn up after the 1948 and 1965 wars with Pakistan. The present LOC was drawn up on the basis of stipulations of the Simla Agreement of July 1972 between Indira Gandhi and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. The LOC was drawn on the basis of mutual consent between the senior army commanders of India and Pakistan. The delineation of the LOC has been shown on nine maps with detailed grid references in the appropriate scale. These maps have been countersigned by the military representatives of Pakistan. A matter of deliberate significance is that this LOC was *not* a ceasefire line, but a line of control, not a line of "actual" control, which might have implied the line being a temporary arrangement. This definitely was not the intention. The agreement was on a permanent line.

The LOC was respected by both sides from 1972 to 1999. What then were the Pakistani motivations in violating it? The macro-level political motivations were manifold.

First, the restoration of an elected government in Jammu and Kashmir and the gradual return of political stability and economic normality resulted in the state fading away as an area of crisis for the international community. Compounding this situation was an incremental success achieved by Indian security forces in countering and neutralising terrorist activities. The efforts of Pakistan from 1989 onwards to destabilise and separate Jammu and Kashmir from India have come to nought. Some efforts had to be made to refocus international attention on the Kashmir issue within the framework of Pakistani objectives.

Second, strategic planners in Pakistan believed the international community was becoming supportive of a settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue on the basis of some kind of line of control. So it was decided to change the delineation of the LOC to a more advantageous position in favour of Pakistan. Shifting the LOC eastwards would enable Pakistan to continue its efforts to capture Jammu and Kashmir from a stronger position.

Third, if this shift of LOC could be consolidated in the Kargil sector, it would also have weakened India's strategic capacity to safeguard Ladakh and the Kashmir Valley. The expectation was that the Chinese would not have minded Pakistan acquiring a more advantageous geo-strategic position on the southern and south-eastern flanks of the Karakoram highway.

Islamabad further felt that if this military conflict could be taken to the threshold of a tangible nuclear confrontation, the international community would intervene to pressurise India to compromise on Kashmir in a manner desired by Pakistan. To sum up, Pakistan's overall plans and detailed military objectives were assessed as follows by the Government of India:

(1) The plan was to have been kept secret, which would involve the least number of people and avoid any activity near Kargil, which might indicate Pakistani intentions.
(2) Only an "in principle" concurrence without specifics was to be obtained from the Pakistani Prime Minister.
(3) A cover plan must exist to obfuscate the aggression and defuse any escalation in an early time frame.

(4) The operation should help in internationalising the Kashmir issue, with regard to which global attention had been flagging for some time.

With these terms of reference in mind, the Pakistani army evolved a plan that was kept confined to the Pakistani Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Chief of General Staff (CGS), Director-General Military Operations (DGMO), GOC 10 Corps and GOC Force Commander, Northern Areas (FCNA), who was made overall in charge of operations in the Kargil sector. Even the corps commanders were not kept in the picture. These surmises have been completely substantiated by the taped telephonic conversation between the Pakistani COAS and CGS.

Pakistan's military aim in carrying out the intrusions was based on the following considerations:

(1) The intrusions would exploit large gaps, which exist in the defence in the sector on both the Indian and Pakistani sides of the LOC. The terrain is extremely rugged with very few tracks leading from the main roads towards the LOC. During winters the area gets heavy snowfall, making movement almost impossible.
(2) The Zoji La pass normally opens by end May or early June, so moving reinforcements by surface transport from Srinagar would not be possible till then. Pakistan calculated that even if the intrusions were discovered in early May, as they were, the Indian army reaction would be slow and limited, thereby allowing Pakistan to consolidate the intrusions more effectively. In the event, Zoji La was opened for troop induction in early May itself.
(3) The intrusions, if effective, would enable Pakistani troops to secure a number of domineering heights from where the Srinagar-Leh road could be interdicted.
(4) The intrusions would also draw in and tie down Indian reserves.
(5) The intrusions would give Pakistan control over substantial terrain across the LOC and enable it to negotiate from a position of strength.

(6) The intrusions would alter the status of the LOC.

Apart from keeping the plan top secret, Pakistan decided on the following measures of surprise and deception:

(1) No fresh troops would be inducted into the Force Command, Northern Areas (FCNA) for the proposed operation. Any large-scale troop movement (two or three battalions) would have drawn India's attention.
(2) The artillery inducted into the FCNA during the heavy exchange of fire in July-September 1998 was not deinducted. Firing continued thereafter, though on a lower scale. (This factor was not considered extraordinary.)
(3) No reserve formations or units were moved into FCNA till after the execution of the plan.
(4) The administrative bases for intrusions were to be catered for from existing defences.

The purpose of this somewhat lengthy background information on Pakistan's military misadventure in Kargil is to underline the careful planning by Islamabad that preceded the invasion there and to bring out the motivations and the mindset of the Pakistani power structure regarding relations with India. Ultimately, Pakistani aggression was repulsed, primarily because of the grit of the Indian armed forces manifested in their sheer determination and physical courage. Also, the United States in a major shift of policy, instead of playing an impartial referee, came down on the side of India against Pakistani violation of the LOC. The point to be remembered is that the US calibrated its policy on the issue carefully. Washington continued its policy stance that J&K is a disputed territory and that its future status has to be resolved by negotiations between India and Pakistan with help from the third parties, if such help is acceptable to both sides.

While adhering to this approach, the US formally recognised the legality of the LOC based on various agreements signed between 1949 and 1972. The US firmly upheld the sanctity of the

LOC and declared its opposition to unilaterally changing territorial arrangements through the use of overt and covert force.

Consequently, the second important factor that resulted in the pullback of Pakistani troops was US pressure on the Nawaz Sharif Government. Major powers of the world as well as the United Nations, frankly speaking, temporised on the Kargil invasion and tended to express the view that while Pakistan's violating the LOC was wrong, the intrusion occurred because of India and Pakistan not having a substantive and meaningful dialogue on the Kashmir issue.

The period between May 1999 and March 2000 was marked by high diplomatic and publicity activity by the Foreign Office of India. The general support that India got from the international community on Pakistan's invasion of Kargil was a result of New Delhi's political and diplomatic efforts. The only parallel exercise undertaken by India, which was effective but did not meet as much success, was in 1971 when India decided to support the liberation struggle of East Pakistan (later Bangladesh), details of which have been given in the earlier sections of this book.

The end result of the Kargil experience is that Indian public opinion is clear that Pakistan will continue its hostile activities against India and that India has to remain permanently alert. What then were the immediate prospects India had to anticipate?

First, there would be insistence from Pakistan and pressure from the international community, particularly the US, to enter into talks with Islamabad on Jammu and Kashmir. Second, to expect not a decrease but an increase in violent subversive activities by Pakistan, not only in Jammu and Kashmir but also in other parts of India. This anticipation was not speculative. Prime Minister Sharif told the Pakistan National Assembly on 12 July 1999: "Though the volcanic eruption in Kargil has been brought under control, if India does not discuss Kashmir in a meaningful manner, other volcanoes will erupt." This pronouncement has to be taken into account along with his statement that there could be many more "Kargils" if India did not come to terms with Pakistan on Kashmir. The spokesman of the ISI, Brigadier Qureshi, when asked whether the so-called Mujahideen were withdrawing gave

the ambiguous response: "I do not know, we have appealed to them. May be there are dispersing towards Srinagar."

The following then are Kargil's lessons for India:

(1) Pakistan is not likely to agree to any practical solution to the Jammu and Kashmir issue on the basis of ground realities and reasonableness in the foreseeable future. It will continue its political campaign and overt military and terrorist operations against India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir.

(2) Bilateral dialogue at the official and even at the highest political level with Pakistan should not be undertaken with any sense of excessive expectation, nor should these be predicated on the sincerity of Pakistan. Pakistan participates in these dialogues only as a stratagem to keep the Kashmir issue alive, to indulge in diplomacy and to achieve publicity.

(3) Pakistan's unalterable objective is to capture Jammu and Kashmir. The substance of its India policy is related to this overarching objective.

(4) Pakistan will continue to foment military tension on the LOC and will indulge in intrusions to capture territory in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan will also engineer violence and terrorism in other parts of India in support of its proxy war in Kashmir. India should remain politically sensitive to these prospects at the policy level and should maintain continuous military alertness *vis-à-vis* Pakistan along the LOC as well as the international border. India will have to locate troops and security forces to the maximum extent possible along the LOC round the year.

(5) India should undertake a thorough overhauling of its intelligence-gathering and intelligence-assessing institutions and procedures in functional and organisational terms. The interface among the intelligence agencies, the National Security Council and its adjuncts and the Cabinet Committee on Security Affairs, has to be organised so that it does not face the surprise as well as the confusion in command control that it faced during the initial period of the Kargil conflict.

(6) Firmness in dealing with Pakistan at the operational level combined with restraint would ensure international support for India.

(7) The support India acquired on the Kargil conflict from the international community was Kargil-specific. There is no such support for India's overall stand on the Kashmir issue. The international community is keen that India and Pakistan quickly resolve the issue, which, in their judgement, contains the seeds of a nuclear confrontation.

(8) India must also acknowledge that a solution to the Kashmir dispute has the imperative requirement of being responsive to the desires of its citizens in J&K.

(9) International support for India's general concerns about factors such as its territorial integrity will depend on our appearing to be reasonable and talking to Pakistan on Jammu and Kashmir. A static stance by India will result in Pakistan regaining international support.

(10) It is equally true that the international community does not support Pakistan's total claims on Jammu and Kashmir.

(11) Important powers are now inclined to ensure a settlement of the Kashmir dispute on some kind of LOC plus a package deal for autonomy for the people of Jammu and Kashmir with the added proviso for normal and free interaction between people living in (Indian) Jammu and Kashmir and people living in Pakistan-held territories centred around Muzaffarabad. While India should be willing to resume a dialogue with Pakistan, we must be clear in our minds that coming to a solution would be a gradual process spread over a decade or two. We must not let down our guard in any manner till then.

(12) A very important lesson to be kept in mind is the development of a US-China strategic consultation mechanism to deal with stability and security in a "nuclearly weaponised" South Asian region. President Bill Clinton and President Ziang Zemin were in more or less continuous contact during the period May to August 1999. The US and Chinese policy on Kargil was coordinated at the highest

level. India should be alert to the strategic complications of this development. Two superpowers having a converging approach on its security environment can impact India's freedom of options.

The next major event in Indo-Pakistan relations was the summit meeting between Pervez Musharraf and Atal Behari Vajpayee in Agra on 15 and 16 July 2001. This was an unexpectedly bold, but ill-considered, initiative by the Vajpayee Government, given the background of the disappointments at Lahore in February 1999, the Pakistani "betrayal" in Kargil in May to July 1999 and the continuing and ascending scale of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India.

Despite all the setbacks, the Vajpayee-Musharraf summit at Agra was anticipated with high hopes and expectations. It barely managed a presence of a continuity in dialogue that had opened after a gap of two and half years.

Factors such as the background, motivations and the approach that India and Pakistan had towards the summit are worth narrating before going on to analyse proceedings, results and implications.

I had the occasion to interact with persons at the highest political levels in the Government of India regarding the reasons why Vajpayee invited General Musharraf to visit India. My insistent curiosity was impelled by the fact that the invitation was a complete about-turn with respect to the policy pronouncements of the Government of India since October 1999 that India should not deal with a military government of Pakistan that had come to power by unconstitutional means, i.e., by overthrowing an elected prime minister. India had continued to refuse the offer by Musharraf to hold bilateral discussions at any level, at any time and at any place. Why then a sudden change of policy resulting in an invitation, on 24 May 2001, to Pervez Musharraf to come to India for a summit?

The information that I have gathered reveals that Prime Minister Vajpayee was not keen on a bilateral summit with Musharraf in India. His preference was to recommence such

contacts on the margins of the SAARC summit and the UN General Assembly session, then scheduled for December and September 2001, respectively. It was L.K. Advani and other senior cabinet colleagues who advised Vajpayee to go in for a bold and dramatic move within the bilateral framework so that India and Pakistan could break out of the logjam existing since the Kargil war of 1999. Vajpayee accepted this advice, particularly since it came from Advani. Some senior BJP party figures indicated that the decision to invite Musharraf to the Agra summit was finalised at a one-to-one meeting between Vajpayee and Advani during lunch at the latter's residence in April 2001. The other reasons for this invitation were inherent in political developments in Jammu and Kashmir. The ceasefire extensions that commenced from July 2000, and were continued till the end of May 2001, had not improved the law and order situation in any way. Pakistan's intrusions and terrorist violence continued, though the situation on the LOC was less tense up to the middle of July 2001.

The ceasefire did not result in any meaningful discussions between the Indian Government representatives and secessionist groups and other Kashmiri opposition political parties. The Hurriyat's insistence that it should first have discussions with the Government of Pakistan before entering into negotiations with India was unacceptable to the Government of India. This non-acceptance was based on the assessment that India formally endorsing such discussions with Pakistan would legitimise Pakistan's claim to be a participant in discussions on the political future and territorial status of Kashmir. Personally, I have a different view. The Government of India need not have developed high blood pressure about the Hurriyat's desire to go and have discussions with Pakistan. India should have allowed the Hurriyat team to go as such a move would have enabled New Delhi to finally prove to the world that the secessionist parties, including the Hurriyat, were (and are) not genuine representatives of the people of Kashmir but were (and are) mere instrumentalities of Pakistani policies aimed at challenging the territorial integrity of India.

Therefore, no serious discussions resulted. The Government of India's initiative in nominating K.C. Pant (Deputy Chairman

of the Planning Commission and former Defence Minister) as the special representative for discussions with separatist groups and other political parties of Jammu and Kashmir also proved unsuccessful. Therefore, the Government of India decided to give the Hurriyat and its associates time to decide on their plan of action and, simultaneously, took steps to reach out to the Musharraf Government. The expectation was that resumption of dialogue with Pakistan through the instrumentality of the Musharraf-Vajpayee summit would generate parallel pressures on the secessionists in Jammu and Kashmir to talk to the Government of India. India also wished to respond to advocacies of, and pressures exerted by, the major powers of the world to resume contacts with Pakistan to discuss issues related to Kashmir and the nuclear risk reduction.

Vajpayee's invitation of 24 May 2001 was accepted by Musharraf on 27 May. Dates for the summit were tentatively scheduled for mid-July; as already stated, the summit ultimately took place on 15 and 16 July 2001. A contextual analysis of Pakistani policies and attitudes immediately preceding the summit is equally relevant.

First and foremost, certain presumptions and predications were articulated in the Indian media about Pakistan responding to the Indian invitation, which were not entirely valid. These predications were as follows: First, Musharraf was coming to India because Pakistan was economically on the verge of bankruptcy and serious political instability. Second, that after about two years in power, he was genuinely interested in finding a practical compromise on the Kashmir issue and in normalising relations with India. This second predication was based on the view that Musharraf thought that his credibility would increase if he came to an agreement with India on Kashmir in a manner acceptable to Pakistan.

While it is true that Pakistan was facing some economic difficulties, that did not seem to be a major impelling factor pushing Musharraf to the proposed summit. Granted that Pakistan's GDP had come down from $ 62.2 billion in 1996 to a little over $ 50 billion in the year 2000; granted that 74 per cent of Pakistan's budget was frittered away in debt servicing and defence expenditure; and granted that Pakistan's industrial production and

exports had declined and that foreign exchange reserves stood at an all-time low of only $ 71.5 billion or so, the fact remained that Pakistan was sustaining an annual growth at the rate of *4 per cent per annum* till the year 2000. The country was generally self-sufficient in food. Also, it could presume continuing energy supplies from the Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, due to the Islamic connections. The most fundamental fact was that the United States and Western democracies would do their utmost to prevent Pakistan from economic disintegration when the chips were down. Musharraf's assuming the presidency just before coming to the summit underlined he was confident enough about support from all important agencies of the Pakistan establishment as well as from public opinion. Otherwise, he would not have taken the decision to elevate himself to the presidency. Public opinion and Islam-*pasand* parties had endorsed his going to India, as revealed by his consultations with these entities on 24 June 2001. He informed them his objective was to persuade India to compromise on Kashmir within the framework of Pakistani objectives. He had conveyed a message to India that such was his expectation.

Before coming to the government response and public response from Pakistan that preceded the summit, it is relevant to mention that the initiatives taken by India signalled its genuine desire to bring Indo-Pakistan relations back on track towards normalisation and cooperation. Between 1 and 12 July 2001, India announced a series of unilateral initiatives. It offered 20 scholarships to Pakistani students to study in India in subjects of their choice, including science and technology. It also offered to implement the provisions of the cultural agreement signed in July 1989 to enhance people-to-people contacts. India announced that it would not capture Pakistani fishermen who strayed into its territorial waters. India also announced a decision to release such Pakistani fishermen in Indian custody. India made public its plans to expand bilateral trade and with Pakistan within the framework of the MFN (most favoured nation) status that India had granted to Pakistan several years ago, subject to Pakistan reciprocating the gesture. New Delhi announced it was liberalising the visa

regime for Pakistani nationals to extend them greater facilities to visit India not only across the international border but also across the LOC in Jammu and Kashmir. The Government of India announced that visa-issuing offices would be opened at designated points on the LOC in Jammu and Kashmir and on the international frontier in Rajasthan and Punjab. This step would help Pakistanis who wanted to visit India or Kashmiris from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir desiring to visit Jammu and Kashmir in that they did not have to go to Islamabad to get a visa. It was clarified that India had taken this initiative despite possible adverse security considerations.

The Prime Minister instructed the Director-General, Military Operations of India, to proceed to Islamabad to hold discussions with his Pakistani counterpart on expanding mutual military confidence-building measures, including CBMs related to the nuclear weaponisation of India and Pakistan. India also indicated its willingness to move forward in implementing agreements that had been reached on issues such as Siachen, completion of the Wullar Barrage (the Tulbul navigation project) and delineating the boundary at Sir Creek. India's motivation in announcing these unilateral gestures was to send out two signals. First, that India was serious about finding a negotiated settlement to the Kashmir issue in its internal dimensions. (That is why India announced a unilateral ceasefire, a willingness to have discussions with all Kashmiri groups and appointing K.C. Pant as a special representative of the government to conduct these discussions.) Second, unilateral initiatives announced in relation to Pakistan were a continuation of this process, conveying the message that India was aiming at doing whatever was necessary to create an environment conducive to a rational discussion on Kashmir and other issues.

Pakistani responses to these moves were deliberately negative. First and foremost, there was no positive reciprocal response to the specific unilateral initiatives detailed above. In fact, the Pakistani Foreign Office reacted to the initiatives by saying these gestures were a calculated attempt by India to shift the focus of the Agra summit from the Kashmir issue. In his interviews,

Musharraf himself repeatedly harped on the point that he was coming to the summit to discuss *only* the Kashmir issue and to find a solution within the framework of Pakistan's aims and objectives. He further announced that changing the status of Jammu and Kashmir was "the unfinished part of the partition". He went on to say that all other issues affecting Indo-Pakistan relations could be addressed only after a solution had been found to the Kashmir issue from Pakistan's point of view, though he had no objection in discussing those issues with Prime Minister Vajpayee. The most important point he made was that his objective was to persuade India to find a solution to the Kashmir problem within a definite time frame. This, in fact, sounded like an ultimatum to India. When queried by senior Indian journalists about what solution to the Kashmir issue he had in mind, he replied that the only solution acceptable would be to hold a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir on the basis of the UN resolutions of 1947-48. He also conveyed to the Hurriyat in a formal communication that Pakistan would continue to provide diplomatic, moral and political support to their struggle for self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. In other words, Pakistan would continue to support the secessionist movement by employing mercenaries, sponsoring cross-border terrorism and destabilising Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan's Commerce Minister, Razak Daud, told a business delegation from India in June 2001 that he would like Indo-Pakistan economic cooperation to expand but stated in the second week of July that no expansion of economic relations or giving India MFN status would be possible unless the Kashmir issue had been resolved. In between, government-backed "trial balloons" were floated by the Pakistani media: that Prime Minister Vajpayee may agree to withdrawal of Indian troops from Siachen; he may reduce the strength of the Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir; India might agree, at the end of the summit, to relinquish control over the Kashmir Valley, giving it some kind of an autonomous status while retaining Ladakh and Jammu. The most extraordinary proposition was that India, in a bold move, would allow Jammu and Kashmir, a semi-independent status under some

kind of a UN observers' group for a period of 15 years, after which India and Pakistan would jointly agree to a referendum in the state on its future.

Such moves could be seen as both pressure tactics and ploys to project to the world that Pakistan had several suggestions to resolve the Kashmir issue to which India was not responding. For its part, India was absolutely justified in refusing any of these harebrained proposals. There was no signal from Musharraf acknowledging the serious implications of the nuclear weaponisation of India and Pakistan and the need to have discussions on nuclear risk reduction. To compound all this, Musharraf changed the composition of the original Pakistan delegation which was due to come to the summit. He was planning to bring Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar, Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz and Commerce Minister Razak Daud. But, eventually, the delegation consisted only of Sattar, who was known for his negative attitude towards India. The Finance Minister and the Commerce Minister were left out, giving out a clear indication that Musharraf approached the summit with a tunnel vision, *to discuss only Kashmir*, and was not even prepared to have exploratory discussions on the possibilities of broader cooperation between the two countries that could create a positive environment and general mutual trust.

It is also worthwhile examining the pronouncements and orientations of President Musharraf and the Pakistani Government, particularly after he received Prime Minister Vajpayee's invitation to visit India on 24 May 2001. In fact, it would be pertinent to go back to Musharraf's repeated announcements that he was willing to meet Vajpayee at any time, on any date, any place. His lengthy interview to M.J. Akbar, published in *The Asian Age* (1 April 2001), was the first detailed articulation by him of his India policies. The second instance was an equally lengthy interview given to Dileep Padgaonkar of *The Times of India*, just a week before he visited Delhi and Agra. In both these interviews he clearly underlined the following points: His primary and overarching objective was to discuss the Kashmir issue from his point of view. He clarified that while he was willing to discuss

other issues affecting Indo-Pakistan relations, he would do so in a substantive and meaningful manner *only after the solution satisfactory to him was achieved on Kashmir*. When queried about his views on terrorist violence and secessionism, his response was that he was opposed to violence and terrorism but did not consider that the secessionist violence in Jammu and Kashmir could be labelled as terrorism. In his view, it was a violent struggle for self-determination and that the jehad in Kashmir was justified. He strongly felt that it was a freedom struggle, which Pakistan supported politically, morally and diplomatically. At the same time, he resorted to obfuscation by stating that Pakistan was not playing any role in the violence in Jammu and Kashmir and that this was an entirely indigenous phenomenon. He flatly denied Pakistan's sponsoring and supporting various violent groups in terms of sanctuaries, supplies and training. When pressurised in these interviews to be specific about a solution he may have in mind, he said that an acceptable solution could be found only by going back to holding a plebiscite envisaged in the UN resolutions to be applied only selectively without implementing the provisions to these resolutions for vacation of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistani raiders and regular Pakistani armed forces. In an interview to *Gulf News* just 48 hours before his arrival in Delhi, Musharraf stated that neither the 1972 Simla Agreement nor the 1999 Lahore Declaration and accompanying documents had any relevance to the summit at Agra. These agreements had not served any purpose according to him. His foreign minister and he himself, of course, claimed later that he was quoted out of context by the Indian media that he was willing to take cognisance of the Simla and Lahore agreements as benchmarks for future of Indo-Pakistan relations.

Addressing a women's delegation in Islamabad in the first week of July, Musharraf declared that he desired a new status for the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir unlinked from India. When the delegation asked him what he thought of the Kashmir Valley being given to Pakistan and Jammu and Ladakh remaining with India, his reported response was that there must not be any ill-informed suggestions on these lines. He told the delegation that

there were Muslims in Ladakh, Kargil and Jammu, and they could not be abandoned. So the whole state of Jammu and Kashmir had to be delinked from India to move forward to a solution. Responding to speculation that the LOC could be the basis for a solution, he remarked a week before arriving in Delhi that: "The Line of Control is the problem." He implied that he did not accept the relevance or sanctity of the LOC. He kept harping on the point that he was the first head of government and state of Pakistan who had persuaded India to invite him to come and discuss only the Kashmir question. Under instructions from Musharraf, Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz made public pronouncements in the second week of July that Indo-Pakistani cooperation could be structured only after the Kashmir problem had been solved. As mentioned earlier, Musharraf did not make any response to suggestions regarding nuclear risk reduction. In fact, he reaffirmed the legitimacy of Pakistani nuclear weapons and missiles as a deterrent against India and linked these items to the Kashmir issue. He also remained adamant about tripartite talks, with Pakistan, the Hurriyat and India being participants, to find a solution to the Kashmir issue. Though he agreed to suggestions that the contacts with the Hurriyat could be separately undertaken by India and Pakistan, he insisted that the Hurriyat should be acknowledged by India as the sole representative of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, which was (and is) politically and factually unjustified.

These signals should have been sufficient for India to realise that he was coming for the summit with narrow agenda and a single aim. The Agra summit was accompanied by emotional euphoria and hyperbole. Such an atmosphere was created despite Musharraf desiring to concentrate on his one-point agenda on Kashmir and his collateral objective of projecting himself as some kind of a protector of Muslims not only in Kashmir but also in the rest of India. The later motivation manifested itself in a number of requests his government made about his itinerary. India originally wanted the summit to be held in Goa as a working visit without Musharraf visiting Delhi. Musharraf, however, wanted his visit to be treated as a "state visit". This was one of the reasons for his assuming the presidency of Pakistan. He wanted to offer *namaz*

at the Jama Masjid in Delhi. He also desired to address a meeting of Muslims in Delhi. He wanted to attend the prayers at the shrines at Nizamuddin Auliya (in Delhi) and at the Ajmer Sharif (in Rajasthan). All these activities were desired apart from his successful insistence on meeting the All Parties Hurriyat Conference.

It is also relevant to note that at the Pakistan High Commission reception he kept senior Indian leaders, including former Prime Minister V.P. Singh, waiting while he carried on his discussions with Hurriyat members. Details of the proceedings of the summit need no repetition. In overall terms, it was an anticlimax, both in ambience and substance.

Musharraf departed for Islamabad, grim faced, at midnight, 15-16 July. He was deprived even of the spiritual succour by not being able to visit the shrines of the Chisti saints in Delhi and Ajmer. India's official spokesperson, Nirupama Rao, expressed disappointment at a joint declaration not being made. Two aspects became clear at midnight of 15-16 July. The first was that the high expectations built up between 14 July and 16 July afternoon among the people of both India and Pakistan were abruptly shattered. Second, that the fundamental differences between India and Pakistan on the core issues of cross-border terrorism and Kashmir, instead of being resolved at the high-level Vajpayee-Musharraf interaction, were only reaffirmed by the two leaders. Foreign Ministers Jaswant Singh and Abdul Sattar, at their press conferences on 17 July, asserted that the summit, though not leading to any forward looking conclusions, was not a failure. It, according to them, marked the beginning of a process of re-engagement and dialogue between the two countries. Public perceptions, however, remain that the summit failed. The crucial questions is: did the summit break down or did it mark the beginning of a continuous dialogue between India and Pakistan? Discerning an answer from the complex negotiations between Indian and Pakistani delegations at the summit requires a retrospective analysis before one can draw any conclusions.

First of all, one should consider the question whether or not Pervez Musharraf should have been invited for separate bilateral

official talks with India. On balance, it would have been better if the first contacts between Vajpayee and Musharraf were made on the margins of the SAARC summit meeting or of the UN General Assembly session. The decision to hold a bilateral meeting was implemented, nevertheless, on the collective advice of the Indian cabinet. This fact was confirmed by Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh's assertion in the press conference on 17 July 2001 that there was no division in the Vajpayee cabinet on the proceedings of the summit. Similarly, Musharraf's positive response to Vajpayee's invitation was based on detailed consultations between him and the Pakistani military high command and other segments of the Pakistani establishment. The logic behind his coming to New Delhi was that his credibility as an effective ruler of Pakistan and as a reasonable statesman would increase by his engaging India in high-level discussions.

There were, however, deep contradictions between the impulses and motivations of the two leaders and the two governments in coming to these summit negotiations. India's motivations were the following:

(1) To explore an alternative track of political discussions to resolve the Kashmir issue as the unilateral ceasefire and other initiatives taken by India since November 2000 had not succeeded till the middle of May 2001.
(2) India felt that by engaging Pakistan in direct high-level negotiations, it would reduce the insistence and stringency of Hurriyat's demands to be recognised as the sole representative of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and to move towards tripartite talks by going to Pakistan.
(3) There was a sincere and genuine desire on the part of Vajpayee to start a process of normalising relations with Pakistan in response to the desire for a negotiated settlement broadly shared by public opinion and political parties in India.
(4) India wanted to focus attention on linkages between cross-border Pakistan-sponsored terrorism and the requirements of a rational solution to the Kashmir problem.
(5) New Delhi was particularly interested in initiating mechanisms

and procedures to manage the serious ramifications of the nuclear weaponisation of India and Pakistan with regard to regional security.

(6) New Delhi aimed at responding to international concerns and anxieties about the conflict in Kashmir accidentally resulting in a nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan.

In overall terms, Vajpayee wanted to project India as a country committed to peaceful means even when its unity and territorial integrity stood threatened by the continuing adversarial attitude of Pakistan. Pervez Musharraf and his government's aims were in sharp contrast to the foregoing Indian objectives:

(1) Being recognised by India and participating in negotiations with New Delhi would confirm his political and institutional legitimacy as the head of the Government of Pakistan.
(2) He wished to prove that he was the first Pakistani head of state and government who persuaded India to discuss the Kashmir problem as a separate and high-priority issue.
(3) The series of statements that he and his governmental colleagues made prior to the Agra summit clearly stated that Islamabad considered a solution to the Kashmir problem, according to Pakistani terms of reference, an unalterable precondition for the general normalisation of relations.
(4) Musharraf's objective was to ensure that India agreed to discuss a change in the political and jurisdictional status of Jammu and Kashmir at this summit discussion. Inherent in this objective was also the purpose of obliterating the sanctity of the LOC from his point of view.
(5) He clearly indicated that the 1972 Simla Agreement was no longer relevant and the 1999 Lahore Declaration could be selectively revised only if the issue of Kashmir became the sole item on the agenda at the Agra summit.
(6) He, of course, calculated that his image as a reasonable statesman would be boosted by engaging Vajpayee in discussions.

It was this dichotomy in objectives that was the first reason

for the Agra summit discussions ending "inconclusively" as Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar put it, in his press conference on 17 July 2001.

The second category of reasons contributing to the break in talks (if not a breakdown) can be enumerated as follows:

(1) Pakistan's perceptions about India's attitudes and predicaments were important. Pakistan felt that India's stamina and political will to hold on to Kashmir had qualitatively diminished.
(2) Islamabad felt that the Indian army and security forces were exhausted and were losing the will to fight terrorism and the proxy war sponsored by Pakistan.
(3) That in the context of its nuclear weaponisation India was under direct pressure from the US to compromise with Pakistan on Kashmir.
(4) That the coalition government led by Vajpayee was not only subject to internal factional pressure but also his government would not get the support of political parties in opposition to take a strong stand.
(5) Since Vajpayee took the unilateral initiative to invite Musharraf, he would find it difficult, if not impossible, not to show some concrete results at the end of the Agra summit.
(6) That Vajpayee would be apprehensive about higher levels of jehad terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir and in other parts of India and would therefore be willing to respond to Pakistani demands to a great extent. It was this assumption perhaps which made Musharraf announce, before coming to Delhi and Agra, that he wanted a solution of the Kashmir problem within a definite time frame. Each one of these presumptions proved to be wrong.

The mutually contradictory approach to the summit was also reflected in the composition of the Indian and Pakistani delegations. India's objective was to restore the processes of multifaceted normalisation, Vajpayee being accompanied by Home Minister Advani, Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh,

Commerce Minister Murasoli Maran and Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha. Musharraf in conformity with his one-point agenda of "Kashmir only" brought Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar, his personal staff and Foreign Office officials. The third reason was the meddlesome role played by the audio-visual media and print media during the summit. India and Pakistan, particularly, instead of controlling and tempering the media's intrusive enthusiasm, consciously utilised the media as an instrument of high policy instead of focusing on the negotiations. India's Information and Broadcasting Minister, Sushma Swaraj, whatever her later rationalisation, briefed the press about the items discussed at the summit in a manner that seemed to be an exercise to stress that the Indian side had been successful in structuring an agenda for the meeting. She omitted mentioning the Pakistan's side insistence on discussing Kashmir. Musharraf, in response, addressed senior editors of the print and electronic media on the morning of 16 July, without giving them advance warning that his interaction was going to be televised by Pakistan TV. His main statement and his interaction with senior media representatives detailed his negotiating stance on all issues. His articulation was direct, but, more significantly, uncompromisingly assertive. Senior ministers and heads of government normally do not hold press conferences while engaged in important and sensitive negotiations, especially on the very subjects under discussion. His breakfast press conference completely destroyed the elbow room and adjustment spaces in the negotiating process. The failure to make a joint declaration was, therefore, inevitable.

There was confirmed information that Prime Minister Vajpayee was absolutely firm with Musharraf on issues of vital territorial security and political interests of India. Musharraf was clearly informed that his political and media ploys were not going to pressurise India, regardless of the criticism that New Delhi might have to face if the summit did not result in joint decisions or declarations.

The basic compulsions of both leaders remained operative in that the summit should not mark a breakdown in negotiations. The press conferences of both Jaswant Singh and Abdul Sattar on

17 July 2001, announcing that Vajpayee would meet Musharraf in New York and at the SAARC summit and would eventually go to Islamabad and their confirming that discussions at various levels would continue, were positive developments. The press conferences led to the following conclusions. First, they were essentially damage control exercises. Second, whatever the gloss put on the differences of opinion and whatever hopes expressed by the Foreign Ministers to overcome them, the fact was that profound divergence existed between India and Pakistan on all important issues. One of the glaring shortcomings of the summit was its not addressing the nuclear issue, which, in the long term, was more important than the Kashmir issue. Though both India and Pakistan had affirmed that negotiations would continue, there was ambiguity about the timings of further discussions and the manner in which the subjects would be discussed, which created the deadlock at Agra.

At the formal government and political levels, the assessment was that the summit marked an important beginning. But one has to take note that the beginnings were tentative and the prospects uncertain.

Quite some time has passed since the Agra summit. Media and political analysts have indulged in an orgy of recall and post-facto descriptive analyses that seem to have missed the main points for rumination, that is, what are the realistic, rather than speculative, prospects of Indo-Pakistan relations? The focus has been on what was said and done at Agra and analyses of pronouncements thereafter. The need is to examine as to where India and Pakistan go from the impasse that occurred at the Agra summit. First, one should look at the official pronouncements of government representatives of India and Pakistan after the summit about what was planned for the future of bilateral dialogue. Secondly, there has to be an assessment of what will actually happen in terms of bilateral discussions. And, thirdly, one has to test the validity of these public pronouncements and the possible prospects in the context of ground realities as they have occurred after the Agra summit.

The policy pronouncements by the representatives of both the

governments were characterised by a certain amount of contradiction and ambiguity. In their press conferences held on 17 July 2001 both Sattar and Jaswant Singh described the summit discussions as "useful". They attempted to rationalise the failure to agree on a joint declaration in terms of certain last-minute complexities and lack of sufficient time and affirmed that high-level political contacts would continue and the dialogue would proceed without break. The objective was to carry forward the positive processes of normalisation of Indo-Pakistan relations. This damage-control exercise, has however, proved to be stillborn. General Pervez Musharraf, in his widely published press conference of 20 July, unhesitatingly laid the responsibility for the "failure" of the Agra summit on the Government of India, nuancing this approach with personal praise for Prime Minister Vajpayee. More significant was his categorical reassertion that all other facets of Indo-Pakistan relations could be attended to *only after* India agreed to discuss the status of Kashmir within the framework of Pakistani objectives. (This is not a quote from the press conference but this is the clear implication of all that he said on Kashmir.) He again indulged in brazen mendacity, asserting that Pakistan was not giving any support to terrorist mercenaries and secessionists, claiming that they were indigenous freedom fighters. He compared their activities to the struggle of the Palestinians and secessionist elements in places such as Chechnya and Kosovo. He also compared the Pakistan's attitude on the Kashmir issue to India's role in the creation of Bangladesh. He went on rationalise Pakistani aggression in Kargil in the context of India's pre-emptive action against Pakistan's intrusion in Siachen. His claim that he had taken a compromising position on Kashmir by agreeing to Kashmir being described as an "issue" and not a "dispute" was an exercise in semantic irrelevance in the context of the policy outlined by him in the summit press conference.

Indians were also strangely adulatory. In policy pronouncements on Pakistan, post-summit, after giving initial indications of the Prime Minister adhering to his acceptance of Musharraf's invitation to go to Pakistan and about continuing

political and other official level contacts, India stressed that the summit failed because Pakistan was not willing to accept the reality of cross-border terrorism and its role in nurturing such terrorism. While initially agreeing to consider Kashmir as an important issue, we proceeded to reassert that the whole of Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India, that India did not accept it as a territorial dispute and that any change in the status of that state would pose a challenge to India's national identity.

Much was made in the Indian media of the lofty views expressed by General Musharraf in the visitors' book at Rajghat (in New Delhi) about non-violence and of the irrelevance of military solutions at his banquet speech, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, on 14 July. Words did not match deeds, as Pakistan-sponsored violence occurred in Jammu and Kashmir even as the summit was taking place. The litmus test, on the basis of which the prospects of a positive and purposeful dialogue could be assessed, was the situation on the ground as if it had evolved and is evolving after the summit. Pakistan has rejected all the unilateral efforts for confidence-building measures that India undertook during the summit. The suggestions for doing some groundwork at the official level before the summit, of sending the Director-General, Military Operations, to Islamabad, of liberalising travel facilities and visa regimes, including in Jammu and Kashmir, were rejected out of hand. Hindu pilgrims going to the Amarnath shrine in the mountains of J&K were being attacked by Pakistan-backed terrorists. Levels of violence being perpetrated by them against civilians, especially Hindus, increased in ferocity and frequency after Musharraf's return to Islamabad. Heavy exchange of fire was resumed along the LOC. Islam-*pasand* parties of Pakistan began questioning the ethno-religious affiliations and identities of the people of Ladakh and Jammu, asserting that they were subject to the overwhelming Islamic identity of Jammu and Kashmir.

Prime Minister Vajpayee aptly assessed Pakistan's India policies in his address to the National Executive of the BJP on 28 July 2001 when he stated that, first of all, General Musharraf came to Agra as a military man with a specific self-serving goal and was not serious about restoring peace. An inescapable

conclusion to be drawn was that there was not even a tentative meeting ground on the substance of political issues at discussions between India and Pakistan. Secondly, Pakistan was not willing to accept the objective realities of its supporting the secessionist forces against India. More importantly, Pakistan was not willing to pull back from providing such support. Thirdly, Pakistan had decided to continue its undeclared war against India not only in Jammu and Kashmir but also in other parts of the country, which led one to a more critical conclusion that the macro-level agenda of Pakistan was to generate centrifugal impulses in India on communal lines and to disrupt the Indian economy and stability. The ultimate aim was the fragmentation of India. This is not a speculation. Gauhar Ayub Khan, former Speaker of the Pakistan National Assembly and son of Field Marshal Ayub Khan, publicly stated in 1993 in a press conference in Delhi that peace in the South Asian subcontinent could only be achieved with the break-up of India into smaller units. In a way he echoed the strategic design of the British imperium at the time of partition, which India neutralised due to the genius of Sardar Patel and the syncretic and secular political vision of Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Agra summit led to only very marginal achievements. The Indian leadership made the personal acquaintance of General Musharraf in terms of his vision and objectives. It conveyed its firmness in safeguarding national interests but indicated a willingness to continue the dialogue with Pakistan in the larger interests of peace and stability. Indo-Pakistan discussions should certainly be continued but the PM and the Foreign Minister should make haste slowly.

Pakistan continued to loom large in India's foreign policy concerns after the failure of the Agra summit. The Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and on the Pentagon in New York and Washington, respectively, on 11 September 2001 had deep and long-term ramifications for international relations, particularly so in terms of the Asian regional security and strategic environment. The US response also needed a long-term multidimensional and effective campaign against international terrorism. This resulted in the removal of the extremist Taliban

Government from Afghanistan. President Musharraf came under strong pressure to join the campaign under the leadership of the United States despite considerable domestic opposition to his stand.

New Delhi extended unqualified support to the USA's campaign against terrorism in the expectation that Pakistan would also be subject to preventive measures as a sponsor of cross-border terrorism against India and as a country that had close linkages with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. But this expectation was overoptimistic. While Musharraf declared his support for the US, he made a parallel claim that the terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir was an "indigenous freedom struggle" over which he had no control and in which his government had no role.

With the passage of time, it would be pertinent to examine the extent to which Indian foreign policy has responded effectively and purposefully to the consequences of these events. The criteria for making such assessments should be the following:

(1) How did we respond to the attacks on the US and did our response result in a substantive move by Washington, in turn, to respond to our concerns regarding terrorism and related security issues?
(2) Was our response to Pakistan-based terrorist acts against us in Srinagar and in New Delhi an effective response resulting in Pakistan desisting from its subversive activities against India?
(3) To what extent did the Indian response contribute to improving equations with major power centres of the world and to what extent did India's cause and credibility increase in the chancellories of the major countries?

Let me state that India's foreign policy was characterised by adhocism, contradictions and impulsive excesses. The following paragraphs will tell you why one has come to this unpalatable assessment.

India's response to the terrorist attacks in the US was quick and spontaneous. While expressing condolences and sympathies,

the Government of India announced all support to the Government of the United States and its campaign against terrorism in every respect — operationally, logistically and politically. Though India did not articulate a definite expectation on which this unequivocal and unconditional support was extended, the expectation was that the US would not only politically support India's campaign against cross-border terrorism but would also endorse India undertaking operations against such terrorist acts. India had also hoped to become an active participant in the USA's military operations against terrorism, particularly in Afghanistan. There was also the expectation that given Pakistan's close cooperation with the Taliban and Al Qaeda, the US would distance itself from the Government of Pakistan's headed by President Pervez Musharraf. The hope was that India would become not only the most important but also the sole ally of the United States in the South Asian region. All these predications and expectations have proved to be wrong because they were totally devoid of a factual, rationally analytical assessment of the factors that would influence US policies in South Asia and West Asia.

Given the Pakistani military establishment's long and close relationship with the US power structure, first of all, India should have anticipated Islamabad joining the US in its campaign. Secondly, Pakistan was the most competent and effective ally of the US because of its geographical proximity to Afghanistan and because of the Pakistani Government having fairly reliable knowledge about the Taliban, Al Qaeda and the internal situation in Afghanistan and the Islamic world. Pakistan being a Muslim country, it was to USA's advantage to use it rather than a non-Muslim Asian country as a collaborator in their anti-terrorist campaign. Instead of structuring our policies towards the US taking these factors into account, we extended unconditional support. Then we expressed disappointment that the US was not utilising our support in any meaningful manner. We further complained that the US was not operationally targeting Pakistan, which was the source of cross-border terrorism against India. There was much petulance and peevishness in our foreign policy pronouncements about the US not having noted India's support and positive responses.

Instead of offering unconditional multifaceted support, it would have been sufficient for New Delhi to declare that India would cooperate with the US in its anti-terrorist campaign wherever and in whichever way the US felt that India could be a useful partner. We should also have clearly articulated not a condition but a consideration that our support was based on our anticipation that the USA would be equally supportive in countering terrorism, of which India was a victim. These aspects were never stated in the beginning stages of our response. Our complaining about the USA coopting Pakistan as the closest partner in this campaign was immature and childish, given the objectively greater capabilities of Pakistan in being of use to the USA in its anti-terrorist operations.

USA's response to the terrorist attacks on the Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly and on the Indian Parliament affirmed an abiding verity in international relations, that each state primarily structures its policies to meet its own national interests. Also, that such policies become supportive of concerns and policies of other countries only to the extent that the basic interests of the state concerned are met. In fact, if the situation was to the contrary, such support would not be forthcoming. This was precisely what happened. The US, while expressing much sympathy and condolences for India, categorically and firmly advised the Government of India not to take any punitive action against the Government of Pakistan. The two reasons given were as follows: The Pakistani Government could not be entirely blamed for the attacks on India. Secondly, an Indian punitive action would interfere with the US anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan and, more importantly, Musharraf would pull back from cooperation with the US. It was only when these views were conveyed to the Government of India that it ultimately woke up to the existentialist reality of the international relations mentioned earlier.

At this point India's foreign policy moved from petulance to indignant self-righteousness and whining. Our foreign policy stance was that "we have always known and we realised that India will have to fight its own battle against terrorism without depending on any external support". In the same breath, our foreign

policy pronouncements proceeded to lament the lack of objectivity and fair play and the narrow interests that influenced the policies of the USA and other major European powers. After more than 50 years of experience in international diplomacy, our foreign policy orientations were naïve and unrealistic. Even more importantly, our foreign policy stance was not that of a country that we pretend to be, i.e., one being an important regional and global player.

Even as the United States launched military operations against the Taliban, Pakistan-based terrorist organisations like the Lashkar-e-Toiba attacked the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly buildings with bombs and grenades resulting in the death of nearly 40 people. While India was recovering from this trauma another serious attack was launched by Pakistan-based terrorist organisations on the Parliament building in New Delhi (on 13 December 2001), an attack which was foiled in the nick of time by the para-military forces of India.

While New Delhi made the requisite diplomatic moves to bring the pernicious duality of Pakistani policies on the issue of international terrorism to the notice of the international community (particularly the US and the other major powers of the world), India also took some operational steps to send a signal to Islamabad that it may also take punitive action against Pakistan. India closed its air space to Pakistani civil aviation, suspended trade and media links and withdrew its High Commissioner from Islamabad. More importantly, India undertook a massive deployment of armed forces all along the LOC in Jammu and Kashmir and also on the international border with Pakistan. All this was done in January 2002 within about a fortnight of the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001. India was perhaps poised to launch military operations against Pakistan, which generated considerable anxiety among the US and its allies. The result was a flurry of high-level official visits from the USA to India and Pakistan. As just mentioned, Washington strongly insisted that were India to take any punitive action against Pakistan, such a move would interfere with the ongoing operations of the United States in Afghanistan. The point was also made that any Indian

action against Pakistan would result in President Musharraf dissociating himself from the campaign of the US due to domestic compulsions, which he could not withstand. Pakistan was advised by senior American officials to firmly renounce its disruptive violent policies against India. New Delhi reluctantly accepted the advice of Washington because of its desire to sustain a strong relationship with the US, which had been forged with difficulty over the previous five or six years.

Simultaneously, Musharraf too had to abide by the US decision. In public statement on 12 January 2002, he declared himself to be against all categories of terrorism and announced that he would take countermeasures against terrorist groups operating from Pakistan against India. Musharraf's pronouncements and promises proved to be purely cosmetic. He banned some of the extremist jehadi organisations and arrested their leaders. For instance, among others, Masood Azhar (who was released from India when the Indian Airlines aircraft was hijacked from Kathmandu in December 1999) was apprehended.

The banned jehadi organisations continued to function under new nomenclatures. Jehadi cadres were released, utilising legal and judicial loopholes. Given this background of events, India signalled a major shift in its Pakistan policy. New Delhi announced that while India was willing to resume dialogue with Pakistan for normalisation of relations, it would not join such dialogue till Pakistan put a stop to cross-border terrorism. The first posture taken by India resulted in further American pressure on Pervez Musharraf, which led to another promisory statement by him on 27 May 2002, reaffirming his government's determination to act against terrorist groups and jehadis. But the fact of the matter, however, was that while making such public statements, Musharraf in his internal discourses with various political organisations told them that he would not stand in their way while indulging in violence against India in Jammu and Kashmir, provided they did not obstruct his expanding support to the American anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan and in other theatres.

It would be pertinent to examine whether the measures taken by India against Pakistan after the terrorist attack on the Indian

Parliament led to any concrete results *vis-à-vis* Indian concerns. The simple answer is: no, they did not. The Indian measures were inept and inadequate because, first, instead of a graduated ascending scale of punitive response, India decided to implement all the measures denying to itself choice of exercising effective options on a gradual and incremental basis. In my assessment, there was no need to immediately recall the Indian High Commissioner. Nor was there any need to suspend flights and railway links. It would have been sufficient to suspend trade relations and impose sterner visa and travel restrictions. The practical operational step would have been to undertake a quick, effective strike against the LOC in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir targeting terrorist camps and command and control structures of the Pakistani army organising infiltration. If the step had been taken within a week or so of the attack on Indian Parliament, it would have had the virtues of surprise and decisiveness. Had the operation been completed quickly, within a day, international reaction would not have been too critical. Even Musharraf could be told that since he is against terrorism and he claims that he cannot control terrorism in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, India was, in fact, assisting him in countering terrorism in an area where he claimed lack of competence in managing affairs. The massive deployment of the Indian army (nearly half a million soldiers remained deployed for nearly a year and three months) was a wasteful exercise in sabre-rattling. It was clear, by June 2002, that India was not going to launch its forces against Pakistan due to two factors: US pressure and the threat of Pakistan nuclearising the military conflict. There was no need to keep Indian troops deployed for a some 15 months in the operation which was code-named "Prakarm". There are unconfirmed reports that these policy decisions were taken purely at the political level without taking note of the professional advice given by the Foreign Office and even some segments of the armed forces. Ultimately, Indian troops were tamely withdrawn early in 2003.

General Musharraf, while addressing his Corps Commanders at the time of Indian withdrawal, claimed he had made India spend nearly $ 8 billion and had achieved a political and diplomatic

victory without the Pakistan army having to fire a single shot, or getting involved in a war. While India might have got good conduct certificates from the United States and other major powers, India's credibility as a military power capable of taking effective action, when under direct threat, stood eroded. Also, such a step only reconfirmed the general impression about India that it was a soft state. In any case, once we did not take immediate retaliatory action late in December 2001 or in January 2002, the military deployment was mere theatre, not a declaration of intent, in terms of substantive policy.

Indo-Pakistan relations remained in a hostile drifting mode. Pakistan continues to support cross-border terrorism in all its dimensions. It continues its Kashmir exercise of suggesting unconditional dialogue with India at any time, at any place. There is no let-up in its anti-India policies. Pakistan tried its best to disrupt the State Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir towards the end of year 2002. The successful holding of the elections has been a setback to Pakistani claims of India being an oppressor in that state. These elections, conducted in the presence of foreign observers, have increased India's credibility and eroded the validity of Pakistani advocacies.

Two more recent events have implications for Indo-Pakistan relations. First, is the US and UK military operations against the Saddam Hussain regime in Iraq in March-April 2003, and secondly the visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee to Srinagar from 16 to 18 April 2003.

One point which merits mention before one goes into the ramifications of these two events in Jammu and Kashmir with regard to Indo-Pakistan relations is the fact that even though the Indian army was deployed on the border, India's policies at the highest levels were full of ambiguities and contradictions. There were assertions that India would launch a military operation if there were further terrorist incidents. Such incidents occurred but India did not respond. Then there were assertions of the threat of a conflict, but the war clouds have disappeared. Such a statement was made by the Prime Minister himself in Srinagar in the autumn of year 2002. Within a couple of days, during the same visit, he

proceeded to say the war clouds have scattered but this does not mean that lightning cannot strike suddenly in terms of military conflict. In contrast the Pakistani approach was uncomplicated. It continued to maintain that there was no cross-border terrorism, that it was willing to resume a dialogue immediately and that if India undertook a military operation against Pakistan, including one along the LOC, Pakistan would not hesitate to use its nuclear weapons and missiles. This Pakistani threat of using nuclear weapons and missiles, to my mind, was in many ways a bluff because India crossing the LOC as a short, effective retaliatory action would not be sufficient ground for Pakistan to use nuclear weapons. Secondly, given the large-scale US military presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan since November-December 2001, Washington had sufficient military strength on the ground to prevent Pakistan from indulging in any nuclear misadventure. Government leadership in India, however, was not inclined to offend the US or to risk a nuclear conflict with Pakistan. What is ironical is that while this was the approach, India started expressing disappointments about the US not responding to Indian concerns regarding cross-border terrorism in a whining tone. After the launching of military operations by the US against Iraq in March 2003, India's Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha asserted that USA's operations were a precedent that India could follow in terms of undertaking pre-emptive strikes against Pakistan.

It is against this background that one examines the recent developments in Kashmir, i.e., in the context of the war in Iraq, the advisability or practicality of India indulging in pre-emptive strikes against Pakistan and implications of Vajpayee's renewed offer of dialogue with Pakistan in the middle of April 2003.

I was in Jammu and Kashmir for three days, from 24 to 26 March 2003. The massacre of Hindus in Nadigram occurred the day I arrived. A number of us who had gone for a conference at the University of Jammu had the privilege of meeting Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed on 25 March. As expected he was deeply distressed at the massacre of Kashmiri Pandits. He emphasised the obvious motive behind continuing and incremental acts of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir — that of scuttling the

efforts at resorting stability and harmony in the state, which he had initiated since coming to power nearly four months ago. It is relevant therefore to examine the developing situation in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the context of the USA's military operations against Iraq and continuing civil strife in Afghanistan. One also has to take note of the contradictions in the Pakistani polity in undertaking this examination.

First, let us focus on the internal political situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The assurance given by the Mufti Government to resume a purposeful dialogue with dissidents in Jammu and Kashmir is still to gain substance because both the J&K State Government and the separatist groups have not been able to formulate an innovative and constructive agenda for the dialogue.

Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's handicap is that the Central Government in New Delhi has not given him an indication of what the Centre's framework is for such a dialogue. The Central Government has appointed a new chief negotiator to deal with issues related to Jammu and Kashmir. N.N. Vohra, former Defence Secretary, Home Secretary and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, has been designated as the Government of India's representative. He has had preliminary discussions with Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani, Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed and some Kashmiri leaders. But two points have been made by political circles in Jammu and Kashmir. First that the Central Government has not undertaken any consultations with other political parties, particularly political leaders of Jammu and Kashmir to evolve a consensual brief for Vohra's negotiations. Second, that Vohra is being left out on a limb because Deputy Prime Minister Advani has not given him any clear idea so far about the broad framework for his project, leaving aside the lack of consultation mentioned earlier. Other factors to be kept in mind are as follows:

(1) Separatist groups have always been divided but contradictions have emerged even within each group, whether it is the Hurriyat or Hizb-ul-Mujahideen or other important dissidents.
(2) Steps taken to moderate the punitive role of the security forces are being viewed with mixed feelings, particularly in Jammu

and Ladakh. The assassination of leaders like Abdul Ghani Lone and Abdul Majid Dar have intensified fear and inhibitions in separatist groups about entering into a meaningful discussion with government representatives.

(3) Terrorist acts are on the increase due to Islamic parties in Pakistan being in power in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan.

Significant but pernicious changes have occurred in General Musharraf's Kashmir policies. Leaving aside the cosmetic arguments about issues such as plebiscite and self-determination, the substantive ingredients in this policy now are to sustain and increase terrorist violence against minorities and against the para-military forces. At the same time, the leaders of the separatist movement who may have an inclination to negotiate with Mufti Mohammed Sayeed and the Central Government need to be eliminated. Next, he structured ethno-religious cleansing in Jammu and Kashmir to compel the minorities to migrate from the valley and, on the other hand, to change the demography of Jammu by increasing the influx of Muslims from other parts of the state there. The consequence is increasing hostility between Muslims and other religious groups making up the population of the state.

With the onset of summer, anticipations are that military pressure on the LOC would be increased by Pakistan. The US-led coalition's operations in Iraq will have long-term ramifications for Jammu and Kashmir in terms of cross-border terrorism. While the outcome of the US military operations seems more or less inevitable, the critical consequence would be the rise and expansion of Islamic extremist terrorism from Algeria in the north-west to the Philippines to the east and in all the countries in between. This time the phenomenon will have the support of Muslim populations who are full of resentment against the US military action in Iraq.

With prospects of political uncertainty in Iraq in the aftermath of war and with the Middle East situation continuing to be on the boil, the fallout on the Gulf, and on Afghanistan, would generate violence and destabilising influences in the South Asian region, particularly in India. Whatever admonitions and pressures that the

USA may generate with regard to Pakistan, there is not going to be any qualitative or positive change in Pakistani policies towards Jammu and Kashmir. What is important is to keep in mind is that Pakistan's plan of alienation of Jammu and Kashmir from India is not limited to one objective. The long-term strategic objective of the Pakistan power structure is to destabilise India by generating violence and communal divisiveness and then fragmentation of India on the basis of centrifugal ethno-religious forces, which it seeks to create, sustain and encourage, as a parallel priority in this exercise.

Attempts would continue to prevent restoration of democracy, harmony and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. In fact, Islamabad's spurious reiterations of insisting on a dialogue will be a cover for these policy objectives and will also be an exercise in preventing important world powers from understanding the substance of Pakistani motivations and intentions.

This analysis of Pakistani motivations is not speculative but is based on official documents related to strategic planning by Pakistan concerning its relations with India. Once M.A. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan were removed from the power structure of Pakistan, from the time of Field Marshal Ayub Khan down to General Musharraf, there have been official memoranda or policy declarations confirming these motivations. The objectives of Pakistan's principles and instructions towards India reflected in the official stance are the following:

(1) Pakistan's destiny is of emerging as the most important regional power in South Asia.
(2) This destiny cannot be fulfilled unless India fragments itself into smaller states, which can be played off against each other. Such a fragmentation is also essential to restore and confirm the validity of the two-nation theory.
(3) The initial territorial instrumentalities to generate this fragmentation are to capture Kashmir and to segregate Punjab also on the basis of Sikh ethno-religious separatism, and the process of disintegration of India would be well on its way.

(4) Pakistan's nuclear weaponisation was, and is, essential to put India on the defensive and to neutralise India's superiority in conventional military strength.
(5) The fragmentation of India would also result in a demographic fragmentation of the large Muslim population of India who, in their quest for security, may look up to a comparatively strong Pakistan for protection.
(6) Meanwhile, every effort should be made to prevent India from sustaining and strengthening its relations with Islamic countries in the Gulf, West Asia, Central Asia and South-East Asia.

Meeting these objectives would also be avenging the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan.

It is necessary that India present this assessment both diplomatically and in terms of media projection to the world at large. It must also be realised that our advocacy on these points can be effective and credible only if domestic politics in India exorcises itself of narrow communal agenda, which have become instrumentalities for electoral victories, particularly over the last two or three years. If communal disharmony becomes a significant characteristic of civil society and power structure in India, our efforts at projecting our cause in Jammu and Kashmir through the prism of democracy and secularism will not succeed.

The Government of India's pronouncements on the doctrine of pre-emptive strikes against Pakistan are getting curiouser and curiouser. External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha quoting the Iraqi precedent asserted more than once in the first fortnight of April 2003 that there was justification for India to take pre-emptive action against Pakistan as a sponsor of cross-border terrorism. Defence Minister George Fernandes first endorsed Sinha's statements and later on expressed the view that what Sinha said was not a policy statement or a formal declaration or intent by the Government. Fernandes went to the extent of saying that it was a casual remark by the Foreign Minister. Prime Minister Vajpayee in a public statement in Sikkim around the same time affirmed that India did not believe in military solutions to disputes but our

policy was to find solutions through peaceful negotiations. Then there is Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani who talked earlier more than once about right of reprisals and right of hot pursuit.

The aforementioned views reflect a kind of confusing and irrational impulsiveness, which shows lack of gravitas on matters of high policy as far as the Government of India is concerned. The US has flatly questioned the Indian rationale for pre-emptive strikes. US Secretary of State Colin Powell pronounced that no parallels can be drawn between the situation in Iraq and Indo-Pakistan face-off on the Kashmir issue. Pakistan, as expected, has threatened not just firm, but aggressive retaliation. Addressing a Formation Commanders' meeting, President Musharraf has asserted Pakistan's defences are impregnable. Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri went one better by saying that India should not indulge in misadventures because Pakistan's missiles capacities were far superior to those of India.

The first point to be made is that, excepting in exceptional cases, no country announces its intention of undertaking pre-emptive strikes, or asserts the rights of reprisals or hot pursuit in advance. The key factors in these exercises are surprise, speed and decisiveness. Secondly, before indulging in such assertiveness there should be careful assessment whether India has the capacity to undertake pre-emptive strikes without doing too much damage to itself. Thirdly, given the massive military presence of the US in Pakistan, the Gulf and Iraq as well as on the northern edges of the Arabian Sea, will Washington countenance such a strike against Pakistan? One would have to take into account the factors considered important in the current US operational strategies in the region.

Three further questions arise: First, can the US attack on Iraq be a model for India and Pakistan? Second, to what extent can India's pre-emptive strike across the LOC be tolerated by Pakistan before it resorts to nuclear weapons? Third, what does India hope to gain by such military moves with its attendant risks? First, the US attack on Iraq *cannot* be a precedent or model for India, primarily because the asymmetry in the military power equations between Iraq and the USA. The USA has overwhelming

technological operational and human resources superiority over the military resources of Iraq in all respects. Secondly, Saddam Hussain was generally considered a perniciously violent influence in regional politics by countries of the region as well as by the important powers. Third, though there was no consensus on the manner in which the military operations were launched by the USA against Iraq, there was general agreement that Saddam Hussain's regime should be removed from authority. Fourth, no individual country, or a group of countries, has the capacity or the political will to prevent the USA from carrying out its decisions on the ground, notwithstanding political and diplomatic moves made through the United Nations to restrain George Bush and Tony Blair. Saddam Hussain's regime did not have the spontaneous or genuine support of the Iraqi people. Lastly, the Bush administration had the will and resources to carry through its decisions regardless of objections from the national and world public opinion.

The Indian predicament is exactly the opposite of all the points underpinning and supporting the US attack on Iraq. The rationale of the US attack on Iraq may conform to India's predicaments and concerns *vis-à-vis* Pakistan, but it is not an operational model that India can follow.

As far as the threshold up to which India can cross the LOC in pre-emptive military action without its resulting in nuclear war is concerned, prospects are not delineable. They are both uncertain and unpredictable. Musharraf has stated that any Indian security forces' move along the LOC will be considered sufficient justification for him to initiate nuclear retaliation. This is an exercise in psychological warfare and pre-emptive politico-diplomatic sabre-rattling. There is a sizeable US military presence in the region, including Afghanistan and Pakistan. If the Indian pre-emptive action across the LOC is in consequence of a major act of violence by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists, and if the operation is both brief and surgical and has the advantage of surprise without threatening Pakistani territory proper, it is plausible and reasonable to expect that the US will prevent Pakistan from getting into nuclear mode while simultaneously

preventing India from larger military operations or nuclear weapons postures. If the suggested pre-emptive military action by India is prolonged and threatens the Government of Pakistan, the conflict can escalate into a nuclear confrontation despite the US military presence and pressure in our region.

The next question is: what can India hope to gain from such adventure given the attendant risks? A limited pre-emptive response to Pakistan-sponsored terrorism cannot and should not be described as an "adventure". This is a long-delayed and necessary response, which India should have undertaken more than once after the Kargil conflict. If a pre-emptive military operation is undertaken with careful and calibrated planning and without our penchant for indulging in advance publicity and posturing the gains could be as follows:

(1) A clear signal sent to Pakistan that India will retaliate against the source of terrorist violence against the country.
(2) It will affirm both our realisation and determination that India has to fight its own battles against terrorism without presuming the participation or support by the USA or other countries. This will result in the US not taking India for granted as a country, which will abide by US advice even when its own interests are seriously threatened.
(3) It could not only bring down levels of terrorism but also reduce Pakistani support to such terrorist acts.
(4) The civilian population on the other side of the LOC in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir will be less willing to support terrorists being launched from their side of the border against India.

If India were to indulge in pre-emptive action, two possible risks are:

(1) Loss of support and loss of some level of cooperation with the US for a brief period. Such an attitude will be shared by other countries as well.
(2) The more serious risk is a nuclear war. But that can be avoided if our pre-emptive actions are limited and brief in their time frame.

If India deems it necessary to take pre-emptive action, it need not be linked to the US operations in Iraq. It should be an autonomous exercise based on ground realities and governed by careful and measured calculations.

Prime Minister Vajpayee has been focusing on Indo-Pakistan relations in his public pronouncements since the second week of April 2003. Following Yashwant Sinha's assertions about India's right to undertake pre-emptive strikes against Pakistan, Vajpayee said during his visit to Sikkim that India's basic approach would be to resolve differences with its neighbours through negotiations, by peaceful means. Then over the weekend of 17-20 April, during his visit to Jammu and Kashmir, he reiterated India's willingness to resume a dialogue with Pakistan to resolve all pending issues, including those related to Jammu and Kashmir, provided the necessary atmosphere, calm and stability were created by Pakistan by ending cross-border terrorism. Vajpayee restated this approach in his statement in the Lok Sabha on 23 April and in the Rajya Sabha the next day.

Other significant developments related to Vajpayee's pronouncements were his publicly endorsing Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's policies of reconciliation with all other opposition groups including militant groups in Jammu and Kashmir. Apart from the nomination of former senior civil servant N.N. Vohra as Central Government interlocutor with Kashmiri political parties to evolve a solution to the domestic dimensions of the Jammu and Kashmir issue, Vajpayee indicated that Vohra has an uninhibited brief to interact with all groups in Jammu and Kashmir. Vajpayee emphasised that India's approach was to resolve the Jammu and Kashmir issue on the basis of democracy, humanism and Kashmir identity, i.e., *jamuriat, insaniyat* and *Kashmiriat*. Vajpayee added that augmented resources would be allotted for development in Jammu and Kashmir, responsive to the multidimensional needs and priorities of the people of the state. Vajpayee described his statement as India extending a hand of friendship to Pakistan, but that the exercise could be meaningful only if Pakistan also extended its hand of friendship seriously and sincerely.

Before examining whether Vajpayee's statements signify a qualitative shift in India's Pakistan policies and the tentatively positive response President Musharraf gave to Vajpayee's statements, it would be pertinent to discern the logic of the timing and content of Vajpayee's statements.

As military operations in Iraq were coming to an end, there have been messages to the Government of India from the US Government that Washington would pay more attention to preventing a subcontinental confrontation. Colin Powell's conversation with Yashwant Sinha, following the latter's advocacies regarding the legitimacy of pre-emptive strikes against Pakistan, were the particular causation of the above message. Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Brajesh Mishra, was proceeding to the US. Richard Armitage and Assistant Secretary of State of State Christina Rocca were due to visit Delhi during the second or third week of May. Indo-Pakistan relations and tensions related to Jammu and Kashmir would be the top item on the agenda of the Americans in these discussions.

Prime Minister Vajpayee visited France, Germany and the Russian Federation towards the end of May. These important European powers are also of the view that India should resume a dialogue with Pakistan at some suitable official level as soon as possible without stipulating the absolute condition of complete stoppage of cross-border terrorism on the part of Pakistan.

Richard Armitage and Christina Rocca were due to visit Pakistan also during their Asian tour. Indications are that while they would exert more categorical pressure on Pervez Musharraf to stop cross-border violence, they would be equally firm in advising India to commence a dialogue with Pakistan, moving away from the absolute condition that India had stipulated. Simultaneously, Defence Minister George Fernandes was in Beijing from 20 April onwards when Vajpayee was making these statements. Although there are differences with China, particularly on the boundary issue, there is some parallelism between the Kashmir issue and Sino-boundary dispute in terms of the territorial dimensions of the two disputes. Vajpayee's statements mentioned above were a message both to China and to Pakistan. Vajpayee's

statements have this textual background. The rationale of his pronouncements was to convey to the major Western powers, led by the United States, that India was not obstinate and that it was willing to move forward to a dialogue with Pakistan. Inherent in the message was an unarticulated advocacy that Western powers should exert direct and effective pressure on the Pervez Musharraf Government to stop cross-border terrorism for bilateral diplomatic and political discussions to take place. India would point out that with the onset of summer there could be a further increase in Pakistan-sponsored violence in Jammu and Kashmir and therefore this is precisely the time that Pakistan should be asked to cease and desist from such activities.

Leaving aside the overoptimistic analyses and speculation in the Indian media about the positivism in Vajpayee's statements, the fact of the matter is that, though the rhetoric has become deliberately moderate, there is no substantive change in India's stand on resuming a dialogue with Pakistan. Musharraf's response has been as anticipated. He welcomed Vajpayee's intention of resuming the dialogue with Pakistan. The Pakistan Foreign Office went into details, asserting that Pakistan was willing to nominate a senior person to commence discussions on the agenda and modalities for resuming discussions, at any time and at any place of India's choice. Significantly, there is no response to India's suggestion that Islamabad take meaningful steps to stop Pakistan-sponsored terrorist violence in India. Pakistan remains static in its stand that it has nothing to do with violence in Jammu and Kashmir.

It is in this internal dimension of the Kashmir issue that Vajpayee signalled a change of attitude in the Central Government. His endorsing Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's "healing touch policy", his announcing brief to Vohra that he can talk to all concerned, and his decision to expand economic and developmental activities in Jammu and Kashmir in support of Chief Minister Mufti's policies signal a positive shift in India's approach to internal issues of Kashmir to some extent. But here also Vajpayee missed an opportunity to state that the Central Government would be willing to take a fresh look at the political package required to meet the

constitutional and political arrangements sought by the people of Jammu and Kashmir particularly in the valley. May be he did not want to pronounce on this aspect till the discussions initiated by Vohra took on definite shape. The Hurriyat and the Shabir Shah Party refusing to talk to Vohra continue to pose a problem, which has to be resolved. Vajpayee's visit to Jammu and Kashmir and his statements had two limited objectives. To project India's policies as conciliatory and reasonable and to give a tentative assurance to the Government and the people of Jammu and Kashmir that the Central Government would be willing to be responsive to initiatives for normalcy being undertaken by Mufti Mohammed Sayeed. Whether even these limited objectives would be fully met is subject to uncertainties and deep-seated inhibitions. Major powers would be convinced of our reasonableness only if we recommence a dialogue with Pakistan within a definite time frame. The Government and the people of Jammu and Kashmir would assiduously monitor whether the policy pronouncements of Vajpayee acquire operational orientations in the weeks to come. There is no need of justification for overoptimistic interpretations or conclusions at this stage.

Having made the foregoing observations one has to take note of the rapid pace of developments in relation to Pakistan. In April 2003 Prime Minister Vajpayee made public statements in Sikkim and Srinagar indicating a willingness to resume a dialogue with Pakistan. Pakistan has welcomed this offer. Pakistan's Prime Minister, Mir Zafrullah Khan Jamali, spoke to Vajpayee on 28 April, inviting him to come to Pakistan to kickstart the dialogue again. Vajpayee's response has been cautious. After his experience in Lahore and Agra, it is natural for him to indicate that preparations for such a high-level dialogue should precede the actual high-level contacts.

Vajpayee's and Musharraf's statements on the issue and Jamali's telephone conversation were anticipatory steps to deal with the diplomatic initiatives of the US mentioned earlier. Pakistan also harbours the apprehension that once the conflict in Iraq was over, the USA's attention would move on to other countries in our region that are known to provide facilities for

terrorist groups. Whatever Musharraf's status as an ally of the US may be, Washington would be interested in putting an end to terrorism in South Asia. In this context, a relevant question would be: What are the prospects of this Vajpayee-Jamali initiative?

First, the initiative is tentative; Pakistan has responded more under coercive pressure exerted by the USA than India in comparative terms. Secondly, neither Musharraf nor Jamali in their response to Vajpayee has expressed any commitment to change their intrusive policies with regard to Jammu and Kashmir. No explicit or implicit commitment to stop cross-border terrorist activities has been given by Pakistan. The spokesman of the Pakistani Foreign Office, Aziz Ahmed Khan, in fact, stated exactly the opposite in a press briefing on 27 April. He declared that Indo-Pakistan normalcy could be restored only when "oppression in Kashmir come to an end".

The process of resuming a dialogue will be gradual and slow. India and Pakistan, however, could create the right atmosphere for a dialogue by taking practical and feasible steps. Both countries could send ambassadors or high commissioners back to Islamabad and New Delhi. Both countries could resume normal civil aviation activities in each other's air space. Trade and ground transport connections could be restored to levels before the attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001. Even interaction in the field of sports could be resumed. These steps could be taken in the coming two or three months. To predicate resumption of a dialogue on complete stoppage of terrorism is not realistic. India should agree to the dialogue if there are significant and tangible signs of Pakistan reducing and pulling back support to terrorists, given the US pressure and our security operations (which should be decisive and effective).

Vajpayee was right in indicating that he was not inclined to go to Islamabad immediately on Jamali's invitation. The Lahore and Agra fiascoes should not be repeated.

Further, by the time the updated edition of this book comes out, fresh developments are inevitable but the overall likelihood of normalisation of Indo-Pakistan relations wil be gradual. A thought occurs that within three to five years the US itself, given

its increasing influence, would suggest a solution to both India and Pakistan to the Kashmir imbroglio basically rooted in a territorial arrangement based on the LOC. India should not be averse to such an offer if the US, with its clout, is capable of pushing through such a solution; in fact, we should welcome the possibility.

The series of contradictions in relation to Pakistan still continues. After asserting for months that India would not resume a dialogue with Pakistan unless cross-border terrorism completely stops, Prime Minister Vajpayee, since March 2003, suddenly changed his stance indicating a willingness to resume dialogue with Pakistan. Then as an afterthought he said: talks can only commence if cross-border terrorism completely stops. This pre-condition is patently impracticable. All that India should demand is that there should be tangible proof that Islamabad has withdrawn support in every respect to intrusive terrorist operations conducted by Pak-based terrorist organisations. India must acknowledge that beyond a certain point some of the jehadi groups will still be creating mischief. It should not stand in the way of a dialogue.

Then again while Vajpayee was initiating this move, as already stated, Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani and Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha proceeded to talk about decisive action against Pakistan, pre-emptive strikes against that country, on the model of the US invation of Iraq. Though some very tentative and gradual steps have been taken by both sides to move towards a dialogue (nomination of High Commissioners, possibilities of restoring air links, surface transportation links, limited trade.), the process is still affected by unexpected twists and turns in policy pronouncements on the part of India. Initially, Prime Minister Vajpayee said that India will be willing to discuss Kashmir as an important issue. But then he proceeded to elaborate on this in a manner which can only be considered politically impracticable. Towards the end of his European tour, on 3 June 2003, and then in Delhi the next day, he declared that the issue related to Kashmir that he was willing to discuss was the political status of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, implying that return of these areas to India would be the agenda as far as India was concerned. This included

territories of Jammu and Kashmir ceded by Pakistan to China in 1962-63. This pronouncement, on the one hand, shows political unrealism and, on the other hand, may imply that India is not interested in a practical dialogue on the Kashmir issue.

The same inner contradiction characterises India's policies towards the US and towards China. India is opposed to terrorism and violent authoritarianism. New Delhi now attaches the highest importance to good working relations with the US but India, without having any direct role in the political developments, proceeded to publicly oppose USA's punitive action against Saddam Hussain in categorical terms. This was not necessary. It would have been sufficient to convey to the US at the political and diplomatic levels that its intrusive action would have had more legitimacy if it had been undertaken under the umbrella of the United Nations. We could have added that India understood the rationale of US punitive action but that Washington should seriously consider long-term political, social and public reaction of its actions. This would have been a measured and sober approach, but it did not happen. The result is India now bending over backwards to mend fences with the US. It is a different matter that taking overall strategic considerations in view, the US is responsive to Indian overtures.

So what does one make of all these undulations in India's foreign policy? One cannot escape the conclusion that our foreign policy has been in a shambles that has only increased dissent about external relations in Indian public opinion instead of creating and cementing a national consensus, which is so necessary. Most importantly, the external image of India is that of a soft, somewhat confused state in foreign policy and in security affairs. No amount of rationalisation and publicity spins can remedy this impression. What is needed is a radical shift to revive a structured, thoughtful and cohesive approach in the formulation of India's external policies.

Indo-Pakistan relations are again on a rollercoaster ride following Vajpayee's speech in Srinagar and Pakistan Prime Minister Jamali's telephone conversation with him. Jamali followed through his conversation with a television interview on 6 May

2003, in which he announced steps for normalisation which Pakistan was willing to take. He said Pakistan was willing to restore surface transport in stages, restore civil aviation contacts, resume trade relations, restore diplomatic relations at the high commissioners' level and so on.

There is a groundswell of optimism about new beginnings in the media and in the public. But there is need for a careful scrutiny of all the evolving policy stances of India and Pakistan. Two factors which should influence any prognosis of Indo-Pakistan relations are the substance of policy orientations and the ground realities in Jammu and Kashmir. The point to be noted is that there is nothing new in the suggestions made by Pakistan except Jamali's statement that both countries should act on the memorandum of understanding drawn up at Lahore for nuclear risk reduction. All other points have been operational in Indo-Pakistan relations for the last decade or more. The offer to restore civil aviation was only to restore air flights from India to Pakistan and from Pakistan to India. There was no offer to restore overflight facilities (over Pakistani airspace) for Indian civilian aircraft because Pakistan wants to make India's civil aviation contacts westwards a costly phenomenon. The irony is that it was we who started this unnecessary game. One wishes we had not. As far as Jamali's offer of including 78 items in the trading list for import from India is concerned, it was a meaningless cosmetic offer. What needs to be done is to go in for a bold move to allow free exchange of goods between the two countries, bilaterally and under the SAARC arrangements. This Pakistan is not willing to do.

On the basic issue of Jammu and Kashmir, both Musharraf and Jamali have publicly stated that Pakistan would continue to support the cause of Jammu and Kashmir against alleged Indian oppression. Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan, repeated this policy assertion throughout the last week of April and the first week of May 2003. Pakistani statements that they were opposed to terrorism remain subject to their caveat that they had nothing to do with violence in Jammu and Kashmir.

Two further tactical Pakistani nuances have to be kept in mind. First, Jamali rushing to send a formal invitation to Prime Minister

Vajpayee to visit Islamabad despite the experiences at Lahore and Agra, and secondly, his stating that the forthcoming round of Indo-Pak dialogue should commence from the point where matters rested at Agra (it is reasonable to assume that the point of starting a dialogue from Pakistan's point of view of the Agra summit is the suggestion). The aborted Agra declaration, in the drafting of which former Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh got unnecessarily involved, made the territorial solution of the Kashmir issue the top item on the agenda without any reference to cross-border terrorism. These two nuances in Pakistani policies clearly indicate Pakistan's limited objective of gaining publicity advantage at a point of time when US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca were visiting Islamabad and New Delhi. There was no inclination to discuss matters seriously as far as one can discern.

With reference to Vajpayee's offer to resume dialogue, there was no clarity regarding the conditionality related to terrorism that India has repeatedly spelt out over the last 18 months. Even his speech in Parliament did not clear up the extent to which this conditionality was absolute and non-negotiable. The other measures which he announced were on expected lines.

Moving on to ground realities, levels of infiltration and cross-border terrorism have increased with the onset of summer. Pakistan-sponsored terrorist groups are undertaking calibrated targeting against the individuals and entities working for peace and stability in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This targeting also includes the objective of "ethnic cleansing".

The prime targets of terrorist violence have been politicians and civil servants of the Mufti Government in J&K who were responsible for implementing his policy of "the healing touch". The second category of targets are the security forces, particularly those managing external security in the state, to bring about a breakdown of law and order. The third category of targets are organisations involved with information, public services and developmental activities. The suicide attacks on the facilities of All India Radio and the television network in Srinagar exemplified this approach. The fourth category of targets are members of the

Hindu community, particularly those living in Muslim areas or in the border areas of Jammu. The attempt was to change the ethno-religious demography of the state. Levels of tension and insecurity remain high.

Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed has remained steadfast in his commitment to the policy of reconciliation. Even more significant is the fact that despite partisan political differences, both Prime Minister Vajpayee and Deputy Prime Minister Advani have extended support to this policy in their statements during their visits to Srinagar in April 2003. Meanwhile, N.N. Vohra has visited Srinagar during the third and fourth week of April, commencing discussions with important parties and leaders. While the Hurriyat and Shabir Shah's Democratic Front have refused to talk with Vohra, insisting on a dialogue with the Prime Minister and senior political figures, Vohra, in a press conference in Srinagar on 29 April 2003 stated that he was not only willing to talk to all separatist groups but also that he considered interaction with these groups essential to forge a durable solution to the internal political parties of Jammu and Kashmir.

A concerted effort seems to be on to negotiate a practical and reasonable solution to the domestic aspects of the Jammu and Kashmir issue. Nevertheless, some basic terms of reference governing India's policies in this regard have not changed, and rightly so. The assessment and conviction that normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir is possible only after terrorist violence sponsored by Pakistan stops remain. That a solution to the Kashmir issue should, in no way, compromise India's territorial unity and integrity remains affirmed. That there is and there can be no role for Pakistan as a third party in discussions remains part of the Indian policy. That the constitutional and political dispensation in Jammu and Kashmir should not erode the cohesion of Indian polity remains a major consideration. That these initiatives require an atmosphere of peace and stability in relations between India and Pakistan was the logic of Prime Minister Vajpayee's statements in Sikkim and in Srinagar in April that India was willing to resume dialogue with Pakistan provided the latter seriously helped create such an atmosphere by abandoning cross-border terrorism as an instrument of its India policy.

The current offer of talks by Vajpayee was to project a moderate and reasonable image of India in relation to Pakistan. Also, as the war in Iraq wound down, a certain amount of American diplomatic pressure on Pakistan and India commenced from the middle of April 2003. First of all, the initiative has been tentative and Pakistan has responded more under coercive pressure of the USA than India in comparative terms. Secondly, neither Musharraf and Jamali in their response to Vajpayee has expressed any commitment to change their intrusive policies on Jammu and Kashmir.

The process of resuming a dialogue must be gradual and slow.

The Agra fiasco should not be repeated. In my view, if Indo-Pakistan talks commence at the level of joint secretaries some time in last quarter of 2003 at a mutually agreed place and time, there is no need to be choosy about these factors. The dialogue should be carefully structured in terms of preparation of agenda and prioritisation of the items of the agenda without any polemical pyrotechnics. Once this happens, both countries could move on to higher levels of, first, official and military level talks and then to political levels. Heads of government should only meet after clear indications of a successful outcome emerge.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's three-nation tour of Germany, Russia and France, in the last week of May has a significance beyond discussions on specific issues, which he held with the heads of government whom he met. The significance lies in the context of trends in international politics at this juncture in the international affairs. In addition, the significance also lies in the fact that Vajpayee has to lead his coalition at the next general elections to be held in India in the year 2004. An important ingredient in the more immediate international context is the unilateralism of the United States in managing world affairs. The US has become overt and assertive. The US-led campaign against international terrorism has reached a watershed with the removal of Saddam Hussain's regime in Iraq and the USA's military presence in that country. This unilateralism has generated both concern and an amount of resentment among other major powers of the world, including amongst NATO countries like Germany and France.

The situation is compounded by the fact that while the US has been militarily successful in Afghanistan and Iraq in effecting changes in regime, it has not found it easy to stabilise the domestic political dispensation in both these countries. The irony is that peoples in these countries, whom the US liberated from oppressive regimes, are becoming increasingly resentful of the presence of the US and its allies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The United Nations and its Security Council stand marginalised in dealing with crises and conflict situations due to some deliberate policy decisions taken by the US, particularly since November 2002. There are fissures between the US and its west European allies on the management of European as well as global security. While the European desire to move towards more autonomous arrangements for establishing a collective European security mechanism, the US has reservations about this move. There are indications that the US may take intrusive political and diplomatic steps to bring about changes of regime in Syria and Iran, or even Saudi Arabia. This has generated alarm and concern among countries in the Asian region. The following points need to be kept in mind:

(1) Since October 2001, the US military presence in India's neighbourhood has increased, mainly in Bahrain, Qatar, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Philippines.
(2) The US is showing greater political and strategic interest in Nepal and Bangladesh.
(3) India and Pakistan have taken tentative steps to resume a dialogue under gentle and tactful US pressure, regardless of denials of such pressure by the Government of India.

The fate of the Palestinian people hangs in balance with important powers trying to marginalise Yasser Arafat with regard to the leadership of the PLO.

Coming back to the PM's European tour, out of the three countries visited by Vajpayee, his discussions with Chancellor Gerhard Shroeder in Germany was the only substantive bilateral

exercise. Meetings with President Vladimir Putin, President Hu Jintao as well as the brief conversation with President Bush (in St. Petersburg) were influenced by the contextual trends mentioned earlier. The visit to St. Petersburg was essentially for public celebration of city's 300th anniversary. The visit to Evian in France was to participate in the dialogue that President Jacques Chirac of France organised side by side with the G-8 summit with a number of important African, Asian and South American countries, a dialogue which focussed on macro-level global economic and security issues.

One can gain some satisfaction that, in cosmetic terms, India's importance in global affairs stood acknowledged by its inclusion in the list of countries invited to the G-8 summit as well as Vajpayee being seated at a head table at the state banquet at St. Petersburg alongside President Bush. Presidents of Russia and France signalled the importance that they attached to India by these gestures. But such satisfaction should not result in any illusion that India has arrived as a "member of the big league". It is India's ostensible potentialities which were given recognition, potentialities which India has to fulfil in terms of its performance, domestically and internationally.

It would be pertinent to speculate on the objectives of Vajpayee's visit and results of his discussions to the extent feasible. The objectives should be summed up as follows:

(1) Vajpayee desired an assessment of reactions (of leaders whom he met) to the trends in international politics which constituted the context of his visit. It is significant that discussions were with the three major leaders of Europe, i.e., of Russia, Germany and France, who have concerns about the emerging unipolarity in international politics dominated by the United States, a concern which India shares. The possibility of India cooperating with these major powers to balance off USA's unipolar influence without confronting the US was an unarticulated objective.

(2) Vajpayee desired to garner international support for the initiative that he has taken to normalise relations with Pakistan.

He got such support in great measure. One, however, wishes that he had not made individual pleas to Chancellor Schroeder and President Bush to ask President Pervez Musharraf to stop cross-border terrorism. An important power like India does not have to plead in this matter. It would have been sufficient for India to mention its continuing concern about cross-border terrorism and to affirm India would be taking decisive action against the phenomenon, leaving it to the foreign leaders to tell Musharraf what they wanted, consistent with their own declared policies against international terrorism. Nevertheless, Vajpayee successfully utilised the opportunity to brief these leaders on India's Pakistan policies. His interpretations and advocacies were strengthened by the general support he has been given by major political parties of India.

(3) Vajpayee's clear articulation of India's views supporting the Kyoto Convention and on the shortcomings in the implementation of commitments underpinning the WTO agreements was timely and relevant, not only to substantive issues related to environment management, economic and technological issues, but also as a statement of India's views on problems affecting the emerging international order.

India's External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha and Commerce Minister Arun Jaitley were part of the Prime Minister's delegation. So were Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Brajesh Mishra and Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal. It is logical to presume that these senior officers on the delegation must have followed up prime ministerial discussions with their counterparts in other delegations at Berlin, St. Petersburg and Evian. This cycle of high-level discussions will be completed when Vajpayee visits Beijing from 22 June 2003 onwards. His preliminary meeting with President Hu Jintao of China in Moscow has prepared the ground. The briefing on these discussions from the Indian side again showed the pathological anxiety of India to assert its self-importance. The Indians proceeded to aver that President Hu Jintao told Vajpayee that he attached the highest importance to China's relations with India. Would it not have been better if the Chinese

had mentioned this in their press briefings as well? If India is self-assured as an important power, it does not need to mention certificates or assessments given by foreign leaders about its importance. Reticence rather than self-congratulatory assessments would have been better.

In overall terms, Vajpayee's recent tour and his impending visit to China would be important strategic and diplomatic initiatives to make a first-hand assessment of the developing international situation and to brief the leaders of major powers of the world about the orientations of India's foreign and security policies in all their dimensions. The visit also would have implications in terms of domestic politics in that Vajpayee can claim a measured and planned approach in the structuring of India's foreign policy and India's equations with important powers as far as the domestic Indian audience is concerned.

The ruling coalition at the Centre hopes to use these arguments for electoral purposes. Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani's visit to Washington in mid-June was an exercise in emphasising to President Bush that while India had differences of opinion about a unipolar world with the United States, its approach was not confrontationist but animated by a conviction that relations with Washington are an important factor in India's foreign policy.

One key factor that would determine the success or otherwise of this diplomatic exercise would depend on India keeping in mind the fact that despite differences with the US, France, Germany, Russia and China, New Delhi attached very high importance to relations with Washington. Secondly, Indo-US relations would have to remain stable and positive, while India's overtures to these powers are nurtured as a calibrated foreign policy effort. A positive follow-through on the initiative to normalise relations with Pakistan would be a factor increasing credibility and support for New Delhi in the international community on issues affecting Indo-Pakistan relations.

Moving forward in relations with China in a practical manner would be another contributory factor to strengthen India's position in the Asian region and in global equations. These are the complex challenges which India has to cope with as a follow-up of Vajpayee's visit abroad.

One has devoted so much space to India-Pakistan and Indo-China relations because they form the most immediate and complex concerns of India's foreign and security policies in the foreseeable future. The other major trends in India's foreign policy over the past five years can be summed up as follows.

First and foremost is the confirmation of the position of the USA as the tremendous and overarching power in world affairs. It is both reasonable and practical to anticipate that most of this century would be under the control of Pax Americana. Instead of responding to this prospect in a matter-of-fact and practical manner, Indian policies have been ambiguous and contradictory towards the US. New Delhi is opposed to unipolarism in world affairs but since India does not have effective means itself or in combination with other powers to counter this phenomenon, it is in a dilemma as to how to stick to its fundamental policy posture of opposition to unilateral unipolarism, while, at the same time, structuring an equation with the US that would avoid confrontation with that country or antagonism from that country. India has limited options in the matter. A logical approach would be to establish a stable equitable cooperation with the US instead of charging at the windmills like Don Quixote. In many ways India has followed this policy during the past few years. Economic, military and technological and commercial relations between India and the US have increased in content and expanded in range. President Bill Clinton's visit to India in March 2000 and Vajpayee's visits to the US between 1999 and 2002 have provided the necessary basis and impulse for this expanded relationship. One only hopes that this practical approach does not get derailed due to the burdens of ideological and historical memories.

Relations with China have been characterised by a realistic approach on both sides. The tension created with China and that country's resentment against India in the aftermath of India's nuclear tests in 1998 have been overcome. It may be recalled that India's Defence Minister George Fernandes had described China as "the most important proximate threat to India" in a public pronouncement late in 1998. Prime Minister Vajpayee stated that China's nuclear and missile capacities were the most important

factors that led to India's nuclear tests in a communication to US President Clinton. Sino-Indian relations took a nosedive for a year and half after this communication. By the end of the year 2000, however, relations were put back on rail. The Chinese became less vociferous about India's nuclear weaponisation. India also toned down its rhetoric about threats from China. India's Defence Minister had visited China recently and had been received at the highest levels of the Chinese Government and the Chinese Communist Party. It is significant in that his access indicated the Chinese inclination to forget the past as far as Fernandes was concerned. As already mentioned, Prime Minister Vajpayee would be visiting China from 22 June 2003 onwards. All these developments were taking place in a most significant and profound political context, namely, the change in the entire Chinese leadership in government and in the party, after the Chinese Communist Party Congress held in the autumn of 2002. Though the former leader Ziang Zemin holds the leadership of the Chinese Military Commission of the Chinese People's Republic, all the other posts in the party and in Government have been transferred to the younger leadership. Vajpayee's visit would be his first exposure to this new leadership. It is not burdened with the history of the long period of ups and downs of Sino-Indian relations since 1949. While China remains an important and relevant factor for India, in terms of regional security, given its defence cooperation relations with Pakistan, there are possibilities of structuring a stable relationship of interaction with new leadership of China. An important point one can make is that India should move forward boldly and innovatively to formulate a durable solution to the boundary dispute with China on the basis of give and take, instead of remaining stuck in the morass of only negotiating further confidence-building measures. We must take note of China's expanding economic and strategic influence in South Asia and South-East Asia as well as in the Asia Pacific region and ensure that this influence does not assume hegemonic characteristics. Achieving this objective will be dependent on India developing strong equations with the United States and meaningful multidimensional relations with countries of the ASEAN and the

extended Asia Pacific region. Japan and Australia should be a particular focus of India's foreign policy in the latter category of countries.

The Russian Federation, the Central Asian Republics and countries of western Europe have become more active areas of attention with regard to India's foreign policy. Russia remains a major supplier of defence equipment to India and is more cooperative than other countries in technological cooperation in the spheres of nuclear energy and space exploration for peaceful purposes. Central Asia and Europe are incrementally important factors in India's economic and technological diplomacy, in terms of markets and investments. As far as Central Asia is concerned, it is important in terms of energy resources. Institutional dialogue with respect to security and strategy arrangements have been put in place over the last five years with these countries, indicating that New Delhi is structuring political, security and strategic diversification of options to meet India's long-term interests.

Two parts of the world that have been comparatively neglected by India are the countries of Latin and Central America and countries of Africa. This neglect could be attributed to the following reasons. First, the decline of institutional cooperation among developing countries and the fading away of organisations like the Non-aligned Movement and the countries of this region consequently focussing on other subregional groupings. Secondly, the decline of the economic importance of these countries in terms of India's short- and medium-term economic interests with regard to factors such as markets, foreign investments and transfers of technology. Thirdly, the countries of these regions are now more focussed on expanding their relations with North America and western Europe. Fourthly, the logic of the Cold War having disappeared, these countries do not have the choice of options they had during the Cold War period. Proportionately, there has been a decline of influence and interest of the Russian Federation and former socialist countries in these regions.

The other important developments that India's foreign policy has had to attend to are the decline of the UN and old multilateral organisations of the Cold War period and the rise of new regional

groupings. The regional grouping of which India is a part, SAARC, remains in the doldrums. So the twin challenges in this respect are to reactivate SAARC in some new form and to establish equations with regional groupings of other parts of the globe, particularly of western Europe, ASEAN and Central Asia. The second challenge that has to be met relates to the process of globalisation. The predications on which the WTO was expected to function have not been fulfilled as far as India is concerned. New patterns are sought to be put in place, particularly by the US. The problem of remaining a part of the global economic order without a confrontation against the US is a major task facing India's foreign policy, which shall test India's adroitness and sophistication. The new challenge is to cope with international terrorism, in which the basic fact to be kept in mind is that India has to fight this menace mostly on its own. To expect the US and other countries to join in the Indian efforts, other than giving political support, would be unrealistic.

The next challenge is to manage India's nuclear weapons status, politically and diplomatically. The objective should be to sustain on our own nuclear and missile capacities, while, at the same time, fashioning relations with the major powers of the world in a manner in which they are convinced that India is a responsible power and would not pose a security or strategic threat to them even marginally as a destabilisation factor in the world order.

The certainties of the Cold War period have been replaced by new impulses and new global power equations over the last five years. The world has become very complex. There are difficult times ahead for India in managing its foreign policy and national security concerns. Finally, the most important factor is the substructure on which the success or failure of any foreign policy depends — a general national consensus and structuring a possible foundation for meeting national interest objectives. This consensus, in turn, is profoundly dependent on the cohesion and stability of the domestic political system, economic strength and military capacities. One can do no better than to quote Jawaharlal Nehru who said: "Foreign policy depends ultimately on internal conditions and developments. Internal unity and progress for us

therefore become essential if India is to play an effective part in world affairs."

Ground realities in India, however, leave one concerned. The rise of communalism and castiest and ethno-linguistic centrifugal forces have resulted in internal disunity and instability. The limited objective of electoral victories is progressively eroding the capacity of the Indian power structure to develop a cohesive and correct national vision. Even more alarming is the fact that internal divisive forces based on religious and communal considerations are adversely affecting India's relations with its neighbouring countries, especially the Muslim countries. The geo-strategic fact is that from Egypt and Turkey in the north and to the Philippines in the south-east, and to the countries of the Gulf in between, India's neighbourhood contains a large number of Muslim societies. To look at these societies through the prism of narrow communalism would be detrimental to India's national interests. The remarks of one of my predecessors as Foreign Secretary, Muchkund Dubey, in a speech on 21 April 2003 at New Delhi sums up the dilemmas of India: "All this [communal riots and large-scale murders] has put a big question mark on India's credentials as a secular state. India is thus fast losing one of its unique selling points in the realm of foreign affairs. The dark shadow that the communalisation of the Indian society and polity casts on the unity and cohesion of India, puts Indian diplomats in a great disadvantage. In the ultimate analysis our battle for carving out a rightful place for India in the comity of nations would be won or lost on the domestic front and not so much on the diplomatic front."

The coming decade or so would show whether India can overcome this elemental limitation on our external relations and emerge as a vibrant and successful democracy.

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J.N.Dixit, born in Madras in 1936, had a chequered education in various parts of India (as his parents were peripatetic freedom fighters). He finally ended up in Delhi, completing his postgraduation there (in international law and international relations). He joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1958 and, till 1991, he served in different capacities in Indian embassies in South America, North America, Western Europe and Japan, apart from stints at headquarters in the Ministry of External Affairs.

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After retirement Dixit has been engaged in writing for newspapers and journals apart from teaching in various universities both in India and abroad.

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